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War and politics in Cambodia

To Charlann

War and politics in Cambodia: A communications analysis

Sheldon W. Simon

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Preface

The academic analyst of contemporary international politics is something of a ship's captain trying to guide his craft safely between the Scylla of subsequent events, which may render the analyses of earlier happenings irrelevant, and the Charybdis of his choice of analytical tools, which may foreclose explanations that are later seen to be more appropriate. He has the advantages neither of the political journalist, who can alter his reports frequently enough to tie them to the specific situations they purport to explain, nor of the historian, whose task is to lay bare the causal connections among events which have already concluded. Instead, he appears to be forever trapped in some limbo between the past and the future, doing his utmost to discern a connection between the two but seeing through a glass darkly. If the analyst of current international affairs has a unique perspective to offer his reader, it is the latter's ability to judge for himself the validity of the author's projection of the future on the basis of past events. One of the main tasks of the political scientist dealing with international politics must be to show, then, how past behaviors affect present situations and future outcomes. His analyses are vulnerable to the passage of time; but that very passage of time may show both the author and his reader how and why his projections succeeded or failed.

It is in the foregoing spirit that the following study of the Cambodian segment of the still active Indochina war is presented. Perhaps these pages will assist the reader in understanding the major actors—what their goals are, what each is willing to settle for—and thus help him reconstruct in his own mind the calculations that they have brought to bear on their decisions.

The author wishes to express his gratitude to several individuals and institutions which provided both resources and time to make this study possible. Particular thanks go to Professors Mark Zacher and R. S. Milne of the University of British Columbia, Albert Eldridge of Duke University, and Vincent Davis of the University of Kentucky for their encouragement and helpful criticisms. The author is also indebted to the University of Kentucky and the Institute of International Relations of the University of British Columbia for their financial support of the completion of the study. A sabbatical appointment as research associate professor in the Institute of International Relations at the University of British Columbia provided the time to complete the manuscript.

Finally, but by no means least in importance, thanks go to my wife, Charlann, and son, Alex, for their good-natured forbearance in sharing husband and father with his mistress these many months—a Remington portable typewriter.

S. W. S.

Lexington, Kentucky
August 1973

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War and politics in Cambodia

Chapter I. Cambodia in the plans of outsiders

At the heart of Indochina there is an ancient country of seven million people, most of them small and independent farmers, who used to live reasonably cheerful lives—short of idyllic, no doubt, but not very far short—and who early in the 1970's saw themselves drafted, drilled, uprooted, rent by violent factions, infiltrated by fanatic partisans, invaded by armies, driven from their homes, and pulverized by explosives dropped from foreign planes. How could this happen?

The Cambodians had no studied designs on neighbors' territory and no irredentist ambitions. Far from seeking involvement in the "national liberation" wars of the region, the Cambodian leadership, headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, had worked long and with much success to avoid precisely that involvement. Yet it came—not because Cambodians could not abide each other, but because a Cambodian war somehow fitted into the plans of outsiders, including the United States.

No count of the "major actors" in the Cambodian conflict would come up with fewer than seven names—that is, at least seven governments, powers, or political movements throwing their weight on this or that side of a minor quarrel between rival factions in Cambodian politics. In the foreground were the two factions themselves—(1) the Khmer Republic, under General Lon Nol, seated in Phnom Penh, with links to the West; and (2) the RGNUC (Royal Government of the National Union of Cambodia), with an absentee Prince Sihanouk claiming traditional loyalties for his Peking-linked rule. The other actors loomed quite as large, though in the background. Supporting Lon Nol were (3) the United States and (4) the RVN (Republic of Vietnam, South Vietnam), while Sihanouk had behind him (5) the CPR (Chinese People's Republic, Communist China) and—with a difference—(6) the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam, North Vietnam) and (7) the PRGSV (Provisional Government of South Vietnam, better known as the Viet Cong). It is beyond the powers of a single researcher to explore in depth the interactions of all seven major actors and their permutations. Accordingly, our study focuses on the two Cambodian adversaries and their three chief backers: for the RGNUC, China and North Vietnam; for the Khmer Republic of Lon Nol, the United States.[1]

1. The Cambodian-based North Vietnamese/Khmer Rouge liberation united front (FUNK) operating nominally at Sihanouk's behest should perhaps also be included as a separate actor. Its activities adhere more closely to Hanoi's goals than do those of the Peking-based RGNUC. Thailand and Laos are excluded from our analysis; despite their major concern with the Indochina war and involvement in it, they are less immediately a part of its Cambodian component.

For a more extensive account of the method of inquiry in this study and of its sources, see Annex I. A list of acronyms—RGNUC, PRGSV, and the rest—precedes the Index. References are cited in full in the Bibliography, pp. 167 ff., below.

How did the Americans come to be active in Cambodia?

Viewed in retrospect, the American involvement in a Southeast Asia land war (so assiduously avoided by the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time of the French debacle at Dienbienphu in 1954) can probably be seen as stemming from a change in American strategic policy in the early years of the Kennedy administration. While the basic conception of an expansionist Sino-Soviet bloc engaged in a zero-sum struggle with the West had developed by the early 1950's, the precise nature of that threat underwent a change. Although a nuclear stalemate was generally acknowledged by both superpowers soon after Kennedy took office, Khrushchev seemed to be opening a new conflict front by his strong verbal support for "wars of national liberation," first announced in a speech of January 6, 1961, and reinforced during his Vienna meeting with President Kennedy. U.S. officials responded, to what they perceived as a new Sino-Soviet challenge posed through externally supported internal wars, by changing the American military posture.[2]

The response of Defense Secretary McNamara was to increase American conventional war capability by raising army strength from twelve combat divisions to sixteen. More important, the President set out to provide counterinsurgency training for the expanded military forces at a time when U.S. officials were only dimly aware of the political, social, and economic grievances around which insurgencies developed. That is, control of insurgency was viewed primarily as the military task of providing security for the population rather than as a combination of security reforms, economic reforms, and political reforms.

The insurgency in Vietnam, with its essentially indigenous causes and support, seems to have been viewed by U.S. leaders as a variant of local communist external aggression, to which an application of the American containment strategy was deemed appropriate. The containment strategy itself, however, suffered from built-in geopolitical disadvantages when applied to an Asian land-war situation. To the extent that containment of North Vietnamese aggression required American forward defense, it forced the United States to maintain a large number of troops in foreign bases. The longer the duration of containment, the greater the probability that the U.S. military presence would generate nationalistic resentment and the higher both the political and financial costs of maintaining the confrontation.

The American legal rationale for involvement in Indochina is based on the relationship between the Indochinese protocol states—South Vietnam,

2. For a full historical treatment of the Kennedy administration's response to the threat of coming internal wars, see Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy*. See also Hilsman's illuminating account of "the military approach" in his chapter, "Two American Counterstrategies to Guerrilla Warfare: The Case of Vietnam," in Tang Tsou, *China in Crisis*, II, 269–310. (For full bibliographical citation, see the Bibliography preceding the Index below.)

Cambodia, and Laos—and SEATO (the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization). SEATO unilaterally placed the three states under its protection in 1955, as long as their governments did not object. But underlying the treaty relationship was an assumption that the countries of the region were convinced of their political interdependence and that most Asian statesmen desired to defend the independence of their neighbors. But, as John Badgley points out in an empirical study of Asian ties through the 1960's, the presumed interdependence was illusory.[3] Hence, if a U.S. goal in Indochina was the maintenance of an Asian regional order against the disintegrative impact of expansionist China and North Vietnam, the *existence* of such an order to begin with is questionable, not to mention the validity of the perception of an expansionist China.[4]

Indeed, some have argued that U.S. containment strategy was misconceived for the 1960's insofar as the United States—the wealthiest nation in the world—had the most to lose by involvement in protracted violence and consequently the most to gain through settling and limiting the dispute. In contrast, containment strategy counseled war in order to protect beleaguered noncommunist states and alliance partners from communist-supported aggression or insurgency.[5] The American policy of containment was based on a modified domino theory (held also by China's leaders, who thus reinforced the American belief in its accuracy): the outcome of the Vietnam war, so the theory asserted, would produce a chain reaction not only within Asia but for the rest of the third world. In the words of the Chinese defense minister, Lin Piao, in his September 1965 address "Long Live the Victory of the People's War," which is frequently cited by American policymakers, "the people in other parts of the world will see still more clearly that U.S. imperialism can be defeated and that what the Vietnamese people can do, they can do too." Much earlier, in fact, just as America began to become committed to the maintenance of a noncommunist South Vietnam, a 1961 State Department white paper concluded: "For Vietnam's neighbors the consequences of a Communist victory in all Vietnam would be far-reaching. . . . The present balance of forces between independent and Communist States in Asia would be tipped perilously if Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos fall under Communist domination. What then would be the prospects for Thailand and Burma, for Pakistan and India, for Malaya and Indonesia?"[6]

There are two noteworthy premises in the above statement: (i) that communism is monolithic and that the ascendance of a new communist

3. John Badgley, *Asian Development: Problems and Prognosis,* p. 190.

4. For precisely this rationale of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, see George Liska, *Imperial America: The International Politics of Primacy;* and for a critique, see William C. Johnstone, "American Political Commitment in Southeast Asia," in Jan, *International Politics in Asia,* p. 247.

5. Bloomfield and Leiss, *Controlling Small Wars: A Strategy for the 1970's,* chap. 11.

6. Cited in Girling, *People's War,* pp. 39–40.

regime in one Asian state will lead to similar developments in the rest of the region; and (ii) that the internal conditions conducive to a communist-backed insurgency in South Vietnam also prevail in the rest of Asia and only await the example of a successful Viet Cong effort as a catalyst. A third premise is implicit and probably drawn from the Korean War experience. It was articulated most dramatically in a press conference by Secretary of State Rusk in 1967 when he invoked the image of a "billion Chinese on the mainland, armed with nuclear weapons within a decade or two. The free nations of Asia don't want China to overrun them on the basis of a doctrine of world revolution." Thus, the United States had a "tremendous stake" in Vietnam to prevent the world from being "cut in two by Asian Communism reaching out through Southeast Asia."[7]

It appears that here a containment policy carried over into a nonnuclear context from the strategic nuclear balance in Europe and got combined with the fear of a monolithic Chinese-controlled Asian communism, and the combination was then wedded to the domino theory in American foreign-policy thinking by the early 1960's.[8] Once that "operating set" was achieved, the process of U.S. foreign-policy making based on short-range incremental changes and a *satisfising* style[9] to achieve consensus among competing bureaucracies meant that it would be very difficult to break the trend of a growing American military commitment to Indochina. So long as a growing American military commitment provided both a way of meeting the communist challenge within the containment posture and military budgetary benefits, both the armed forces' status within the federal government and the vertical mobility of its career officers increased. As the military component of American involvement in Vietnam expanded, particularly after 1964, civilian control over the political effects of military decisions atrophied. This was symbolized by the de facto subordination of the American ambassador in Saigon to the chief of the military operations mission as well as by military control over and consequent military criteria for the success of civilian assistance programs run by the Agency for International Development (AID) and such special grass roots groups as CORDs.[10] That the State Department lacked both programmatic responsibilities and congressional support meant that it would consistently lose out

7. Cited in Girling, p. 45.

8. Much of the Pentagon Papers material supports this conception. See, for example, the lengthy excerpts published in the *New York Times* through most of June 1971.

9. A "satisfising process" is one that aims at producing a policy acceptable to all parties by modifying through bargaining the separate policy position of each contributor, even if the outcome is not wholly satisfying to any of them. The notion is drawn from the literature of organization theory and refers to the ways in which agencies barter policy preferences in order to provide some payoff to each contributor. See Robert Rothstein, "Domestic Politics and Peacemaking: Reconciling Incompatible Alternatives," pp. 66–67.

10. See Hilsman, "Two American Counterstrategies in Guerrilla Warfare," in Tang Tsou, II.

to a well-funded and congressionally backed military program.[11] Thus, U.S. involvement in Vietnam came to be defined primarily as a military problem by the mid-1960's, rather than as a complex of military security along with social, economic, and political grievances.

While the United States labeled the Vietnamese insurgency a "national liberation" test case to drive America out of Asia and break its containment strategy, Chinese leaders may well have held a mirror-image view of American intentions. U.S. defense relations with the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, together with SEATO, existed alongside a rapid military buildup of American forces in South Vietnam and Thailand during the 1960's. Chinese leaders interpreted these developments as signifying a shift in U.S. global priorities from Europe to Asia and as a potential threat to the viability of North Vietnam.[12]

A lively debate ensued in Peking. Should China's major goal be the predominantly defensive one of eliminating a perceived American threat to its southwestern border area? In that case a negotiated settlement for Indochina might be acceptable if it led to a withdrawal of American forces. Or should the goal be rather to propagate the Vietnam war as an example for "national liberation" forces throughout the world, to illustrate the basic inability of the United States to cope with this kind of military-socio-political conflict? In that case a negotiated settlement would be subordinated to a decisive military humiliation for the United States. The debate was illustrated by the famous exchange of articles in 1965 by the chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army, Lo J'ui-ching, and the defense minister Lin Piao. Lo, on May 10, argued for the dispatch of North Vietnamese regulars into South Vietnam to counter the American buildup and obtain a favorable military balance (perhaps for subsequent negotiations). Lin, however, in his tract of September 3, "Long Live the Victory of the People's War," held that the introduction of outside troops would undercut the rationale of indigenous "liberation" forces, enlarge the opportunity for Soviet influence in North Vietnam because of the latter's logistical requirements, and perhaps also serve as a provocation to the Americans to attack the North Vietnamese home territory of the outside troops and hence directly threaten China's own border area.[13]

The prolonged stalemate from 1965 to 1970 between the U.S./South Vietnam and the North Vietnam/Viet Cong provides the proximate setting for Cambodia's involvement in the Indochina war. In the aftermath of the

11. Roy M. Melbourne, "The Operations Side of Foreign Policy," pp. 544, 553.

12. Arthur Huck, *The Security of China*, p. 45.

13. There are several good accounts of this internal debate over Chinese strategy. For a brief summary, see Harold C. Hinton, *China's Turbulent Quest*, pp. 142–43. For more extensive analyses, see Hinton, "China and Vietnam," and Uri Ra'anan, "Peking's Foreign Policy Debate: 1965–1966," both in Tang Tsou, II, 201–36 and 23–72.

Tet offensive of February 1968, U.S. officials reluctantly concluded that a protracted, indecisive Vietnam war was politically unacceptable to American voters, especially when military leaders insisted that a commitment of close to 800,000 U.S. troops would be necessary after Tet in order to recoup losses to America's major hope for a noncommunist Vietnam—the pacification program.[14] However, the basic premises of American concern over the region were not reevaluated at the official level. That is, the view of Vietnam as the beginning of a domino sequence and the belief that Chinese and North Vietnamese goals were identical and totally antithetical to American involvement in Asia remained the operating assumptions of U.S. foreign-policy makers in the early years of the Nixon administration.

In effect, President Nixon was concerned less with American involvement in Vietnam per se and more with the direct cost of that involvement through his enunciation and subsequent elaboration of the Nixon Doctrine, originally presented to the world in a press conference on Guam in July 1969.[15] Nixon explained his conception of a "new" American security role in Asia as a retreat from unilateral security planning: "We will concentrate more on getting other countries engaged with us in the formulation of policies; they will be less involved in trying to influence American decisions and more involved in devising their own approaches." The President placed new emphasis on Asian regional responsibility for the security of its member states and indicated that his administration would be particularly forthcoming to regional responses to conflict (in the Cambodian case, for example, among Thailand, South Vietnam, and the Khmer Republic). Nonetheless, displaying considerable concern over the continuity of U.S. responsibilities to allies and friends as well as its global eminence, the President stopped short of reevaluating America's traditional containment posture. Instead, he insisted—in a manner somewhat contradictory to the first part of his statement—that America's strength and security commitments required that the United States refrain from abruptly changing its policies. That is, past effects of the American presence in Asia have determined particular foreign policies on the part of nations in the region which could not readily be adjusted to an about-face in U.S. intentions. In effect, the President seemed to say that some time would be required (although how much is unclear) to provide Asian statesmen the necessary

14. The best single account of the bureaucratic politics of Vietnam executive decision-making and the changing coalitions among civilian and military officials regarding the most suitable strategy for the war is Townsend Hoopes, *The Limits of Intervention*. For an analysis of diminishing public opinion support for U.S. involvement, see S. M. Lipset, "The President, the Polls, and Vietnam," in Robert J. Lifton, *America and the Asian Revolutions* (Chicago: Aldine), pp. 101–16.

15. For an analysis of probable Asian abilities and interests in implementing the indigenous defense arrangements urged in the Nixon Doctrine, see Sheldon W. Simon, "A Systems Approach to Security in the Indian Ocean Arc," and "The Nixon Doctrine and Prospects for Asian Regional Cooperation"; and Bernard K. Gordon and Kathryn Young, *Asian Defense Postures*.

opportunities for exploring alternatives to heavy dependence on the United States for their national security.[16]

It is in the context, then, of an American decision to extricate itself gradually from the heavy military burdens, both human and financial, of the Vietnam war, while simultaneously pursuing the goal of the maintenance of a noncommunist South Vietnam, that Cambodia became involved in the Indochina maelstrom. From the American viewpoint, the internal political setting in Cambodia which brought about a change in leadership in March 1970 from Prince Sihanouk to General Lon Nol and his supporters was unimportant. Only the opportunities provided by that leadership change for America's Vietnamization policy were important.[17] As will be discussed below in detail, the change of the Cambodian regime seemed to provide an opportunity for the United States to buy more time for its Vietnamization policy while reducing temporarily the level of military threat to remaining American forces in Vietnam. In short, Cambodia's involvement in the war appeared to be a proper and convenient way of implementing the Nixon Doctrine.

Up to the point of Cambodia's gross territorial involvement in the Vietnam war beginning in 1970, it had managed to avoid becoming a part of the Indochina "shatterzone" in which the conflicting interests of the region's members and adjoining great powers determined the level of national violence.[18] All of the major actors, including Hanoi, Saigon, Washington, and Peking, had agreed tacitly that although Cambodian territory was available as a temporary sanctuary for Viet Cong forces subject to American "hot pursuit" tactics, it would not be used as a major staging area against South Vietnam. Violation of that tacit arrangement by the DRV/VC forces beginning in 1969 undercut the validity of Cambodia's neutrality which had been so carefully cultivated by Prince Sihanouk throughout the 1960's (to be discussed below). And revelations in the summer of 1973 of unpublicized American bombing of eastern Cambodia after the Vietnamese communist buildup doubly jeopardized the country's neutral position.

Aspirations of the major external actors

If a settlement of the Cambodian conflict had to satisfy the regional security interests of both the belligerents and their external supporters, then some understanding is required of how the disposition of Cambodia fitted

16. Richard M. Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A Report to the Congress* (Washington, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Feb. 1971), pp. 12–15.

17. "Vietnamization" refers to a decision taken in the early days of the Nixon administration. It is the transfer of major combat responsibilities in Vietnam from U.S. forces to ARVN, while still trying to minimize the probability of the collapse of the Saigon government.

18. For a discussion of the geopolitical concept "shatterzone," see John P. Vloyantes, *Spheres of Influence*, p. 5.

into the broader aspirations of the United States and China as major backers. (A more detailed position of each toward the Cambodian war appears in subsequent chapters.) Any future reestablishment of nonalignment for the Cambodians appeared feasible only if the contenders for regional influence perceived the utility of a buffer area committed to neither side.

The initial rationale for American involvement in Indochina, as discussed above, was a containment policy against what was perceived to be a Sino-Soviet thrust into the peripheries of continental Asia—first in Korea and then in Vietnam. War termination differed in these conflicts. In Korea, the symmetrical military stalemate could immediately be translated into political terms by restoring the *status quo ante*. The Korean conflict, then, was terminated (or at least reduced from violence to predominantly verbal abuse) without reorientation, leaving the underlying political antagonism unresolved, but rendering any attempt to reopen the issue impracticable. This relatively happy outcome did not develop in Vietnam. The military situation remained fluid; consequently, the basis for termination without political reorientation by one side was virtually impossible to achieve.

Although reorientation occurred in neither Saigon nor Hanoi, it came about on a large scale among important segments of both American elite and general opinion. Repudiation of the war on both moral and practical grounds forced the Nixon administration to recast American intervention policy through a program of "Vietnamization"—a strategy for implementing the Nixon Doctrine in Indochina. The Vietnamization policy, however, had not facilitated conflict termination through 1972. Rather, it amounted to an attempt to provide an American logistical and air power substitute for U.S. troops. This once again made it all but impossible to end the conflict without political reorientation, since Vietnamization buttressed Saigon's natural intransigence without changing the military balance in its favor.[19]

The President explained Vietnamization as a policy devised through a process of elimination after the alternatives of escalation, capitulation, and holding action were eliminated as either too costly or too humiliating.[20] Vietnamization, then, was a "new" way of attaining the original goal of a noncommunist South Vietnam. Intervention in Cambodia was justified by American officials as ancillary to U.S. objectives in Vietnam rather than for the maintenance of a noncommunist Cambodian government for its own sake. These officials may have been less than ingenuous, however, in stating that they believed a one-time American incursion would not have to be followed by a broader American commitment in Indochina, in effect

19. For a comparison of contrasting settlement approaches for Korea and Vietnam, see Paul Keckskemeti, "Political Rationality in Ending War." See also Robert H. Johnson, "Vietnamization: Can It Work?"

20. Nixon, p. 62.

widening the war. Secretary of State Rogers, for example, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, averred that American aid to Cambodia contributed to U.S. objectives in Vietnam, while minimizing direct involvement.[21] In the same vein, Defense Secretary Laird observed that as a result of the U.S./ARVN incursion into Cambodia and the tacit support given that incursion by the Phnom Penh regime, North Vietnamese troops were diverted farther into Cambodia to defend and relocate supply lines. This, in turn, led to a substantial drop in U.S. casualties in South Vietnam's Military Region III.[22] Clearly, both Secretary Rogers and Secretary Laird considered any effects adverse to Cambodian peace to be secondary. The President, moreover, demonstrated that he was not unaware of Cambodia's bleak prospects once it had been sucked into the Indochinese vortex when he warned that "Hanoi could . . . use its buildup of forces in South Laos and Northeastern Cambodia to step up its pressures against the Cambodian government or to increase its hold on Cambodian territory."[23] These apprehensions, raised in early 1971, were soon validated (as discussed in subsequent chapters). From the American point of view, then, by the summer of 1970, a separate settlement of the Cambodian conflict was infeasible before a settlement in Vietnam. In order to maintain a noncommunist government in Saigon, military assaults on Vietnamese communist enclaves in Cambodia were essential to forestall the buildup of a strike capacity against South Vietnam's Military Region III and the Mekong Delta area in general.

Peking appeared to have no direct interest in the development of a Vietnamese-communist-controlled Cambodia. Indeed, in a *People's Daily* map of the world published during the zenith of the Great Cultural Revolution on September 26, 1968, only Cambodia and Pakistan were *excluded* from a list of Asian states identified as ripe for revolution.[24] As Peter Van Ness has convincingly demonstrated, Peking's major foreign-policy interest in Asia in the mid-1960's did not involve the encouragement of indiscriminate revolution but rather concentrated on establishing a series of buffer states around its border—preferably, but not necessarily, communist-controlled. So long as these states were not tied to the West, they were not considered to be threatening China's security.[25] One of China's major devices for influencing a country with which it hoped to establish relations was the cultivation of a belief that a posture of official friendliness toward the CPR

21. U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Supplemental Foreign Assistance Authorizations, 1970, Hearings* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 10–11 Dec. 1970), p. 5.
22. U.S. Department of State *Bulletin* 63, no. 1642 (14 Dec. 1970): 754.
23. Nixon, p. 80.
24. Cited in Huck, pp. 9 and 23.
25. Peter Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy*, pp. 174–75.

would insure that no Chinese-backed revolutionaries would appear on the country's soil.

China's support for Prince Sihanouk's National United Front of Kampuchea (the FUNK)—a communist-led united front from below, ostensibly established to bring together under one banner all opposition to the Lon Nol government but also committed to continuing a social revolution under communist direction—is probably comparable to its support for the National Liberation Front (NLF) in South Vietnam. It represents a change in China's orientation toward Cambodia, however, because by approving the Sihanouk regime prior to the March 1970 change of government, Peking was practicing a policy of *united front from above,* that is, the cultivation of nationalist governments willing to sustain an anti-American orientation.[26]

China's decision to support and partially sponsor the Sihanouk exile movement was based on the Chinese policy, described above by Van Ness, of establishing friendly buffer states, particularly when their leadership is staunchly anti-American. However, it is probable that Chinese leaders have mixed feelings about the future success of the RGNUC/FUNK because its military arm was, through 1972, overwhelmingly composed of Vietnamese communists whose own separate goal may well be the creation of a Vietnamese-dominated Indochina. Such a country would be more capable of resisting Chinese influence than the unintegrated Indochinese states supported by Peking at Geneva in 1954 and 1962.

Concern of noncommunist Asian states over the Cambodian war

Although the focus of this study is on the attitudes and behaviors of the major actors in the Cambodian conflict, the Cambodian war also drew together for the first time high-level leaders from a number of Asian noncommunist states (minus the great powers) to discuss a regional security issue—a development worth a passing glance here.

On May 16–17, 1970, the Indonesian government sponsored a foreign ministers' conference in Djakarta, proclaiming that "problems of the area should be primarily the concern of countries of the area themselves." The aim of the conference, according to its Indonesian sponsors, was "to find a constructive formula on how to stop the situation in Cambodia from further deteriorating . . . in order to enable the Cambodian people to solve their own problems while preserving their policy of . . . nonalignment."[27] Although invitations to the conference were sent to twenty Asian states, including all communist governments, only ten noncommunist states

26. For a more thorough discussion of China's mixed-motive orientation to national liberation movements, See Van Ness's book and Hinton, *China's Turbulent Quest.*

27. Government of Indonesia, Department of Foreign Affairs, *Indonesia* 1, no. 5 (May 1970): 4.

actually attended; all of these held a pro-Western orientation and some were directly involved on the RVN side in the Vietnam war, nations which had military alliances with the United States, and nations which were members of anticommunist regional organizations like ASEAN and ASPAC. Significantly, neither India nor Pakistan chose to participate, probably because of their ties respectively with the Soviet Union and China as well as their reasonably good relations with North Vietnam. The states attending included Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Vietnam, Laos, and Indonesia. The Phnom Penh government dispatched an observer group which was permitted to address the conference but not to participate in its deliberations. The Indian government, not present, urged that "the conference of nonaligned nations of Southeast Asia" be convened instead of the proposed Indonesian foreign ministers' conference because the former would be viewed as less anticommunist and hence possibly more acceptable to the DRV and China.[28]

There were several significant features about the conference. One was the mere fact that Asians were meeting on a security problem for the first time with no outside prodding or interference. Secondly, Japan was participating—again, for the first time—in a *regional* security conclave. President Suharto, in his opening address, noted that the big powers, entrusted with special responsibility for peace in Indochina through the 1954 Geneva Agreement, had shown no sign of taking action in that direction in Cambodia. Hence, the Asian states themselves were "obliged to make an attempt in order to contribute and to take the first step toward restoring peace in a neighboring country."[29]

Conference resolutions which called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia were filed with the United Nations. More important, the foreign ministers of Japan, Malaysia, and Indonesia embarked upon consultations with the cochairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference—Great Britain and the Soviet Union—and with the United States. Although the results of the consultations were predictably inconclusive, the conference did put a number of Asian states, including Japan, on record disapproving the North Vietnamese/Viet Cong intervention in Cambodia and refusing to regard it as merely another Indochinese civil war. The Djakarta Conference demonstrated that, unlike the Vietnam war, the Cambodian conflict was considered by many Asians to be a clear case of external aggression.

Beyond the consensus that primary blame lay with the Vietnamese communists for the Cambodian war, however, little agreement was reached on an appropriate course of action for conference participants. Representa-

28. *India News* (Washington: Embassy of the Republic of India) 15 May 1970.
29. *Indonesia,* pp. 4, 8.

tives of New Zealand, Thailand, the Republic of Vietnam, and Japan desired the establishment of a permanent observation group to report on Cambodian developments, while Malaysia and Singapore were opposed to any institutionalization of the conference. It was finally decided that a three-nation delegation designated by the conference would meet with U.N. Secretary-General U Thant, the 1954 Geneva Conference cochairmen, and other interested parties to explore the possibility of convening "an international conference along the lines suggested by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and others."[30]

The conference had barely concluded when Prince Sihanouk condemned it from his Peking exile as "engineered by U.S. imperialism" with "no other aim than to confirm the illegal authority of the Lon Nol/Sirik Matak clique." Sihanouk went on to "thank the countries which have refused to participate in this so-called conference."[31] The North Vietnamese military press similarly depicted the conference as having "a 100 percent U.S. stamp," the participants all being "members of alliance blocs directed by the United States."[32] Soviet sources likewise condemned the Djakarta meeting as "an encouragement of U.S. aggressive actions."[33] The three-nation committee designated by the conference to explore the possibility of U.N. action was dismissed by Peking's authoritative *People's Daily* commentator on May 20 as a "task force of U.S. imperialism," while the United Nations was told "that it has no right whatsoever to interfere in Cambodia's affairs."

By early June the three-nation committee had contacted British, Soviet, Indian, Polish, and Canadian officials about the possibility of reconvening the International Control Commission for Cambodia. The Soviet reply was that any international conference on Cambodia was a matter solely for the Indochinese states themselves and, in any case, that all other countries involved (i.e., the United States) must remove their forces prior to any negotiations.[34] By early July the Japanese Foreign Ministry concluded that the prospects for an Asian conference to settle the Cambodia crisis were dim, largely because both Thai and South Vietnamese forces had become involved on the Phnom Penh side of the dispute, violating "the spirit of the Asian Conference" and rendering "meaningless" any attempt to "hold the Asian conference again with the same lineups."[35]

The most important result of the Foreign Ministers' Conference's attempt to settle the Cambodian war in its early stages was not so much its failure but rather, as Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik put it, the fact that it tried

30. See the reports of delegates' speeches carried by Antara on 16–17 May 1970.
31. New China News Agency (NCNA), 17 May 1970.
32. *Quan Doi Nhan Dan,* 16 May 1970.
33. Tass, 18 May 1970.
34. Tass, 18 June 1970.
35. Report of Japanese special envoy Hogen to Foreign Minister Aichi, discussed in *Asahi,* 8 July 1970.

"to implement the slogan of 'Asian problems [being] solved by Asians themselves.' "[36] Instrumental for this new regional initiative was Japan's role in formulating a conference position moderate enough to be acceptable to nonaligned as well as pro-Western states—if not to communist regimes.[37] Yet critics of the conference and Japan's role pointed precisely to the communists' rejection as the gathering's major shortcoming.

Plans for the conference originally were made by the Thai, Indonesian, and Japanese foreign ministers at an ECAFE meeting in Bangkok in the middle of April. The subsequent American intervention, which was endorsed by Japan, however, undermined the rationale for an independent meeting and created instead the general image of an international gathering to legitimate American backing for the Phnom Penh government. As *Asahi* asked editorially on May 19, if the purpose of the conference was to discover a just, peaceful, and effective settlement of the situation, "should we not start new efforts to rally together all nations of Asia, including China and India, instead of merely hoping for the assistance of outside big powers, if the spirit of 'settling Asian problems by the hands of Asians themselves,' which is the keynote of this Conference, is to be firmly maintained?"

In effect, the Djakarta conference became the pro–Lon Nol counterpart of a Chinese-sponsored Indochinese Peoples' Solidarity meeting in Kwangtung province in late April, which articulated Asian communist backing for the Sihanouk-led FUNK/RGNUC. Rather than mitigating the Indochinese conflict, the first exclusively Asian gathering in Djakarta had the effect of further polarizing Asian orientations toward Indochina and hence reinforcing the prospect of yet another protracted conflict on the Asian mainland. Finally, the conference revealed the lack of leverage available to regional members when great powers are lined up on opposite sides of a local dispute. Neither positive nor negative sanctions were available to participants at the Djakarta meeting to persuade either Sihanouk or Lon Nol to negotiate their dispute. Hence, Asian regional concern over the Cambodian conflict was not equaled by any capacity to act. If the Cambodian war was to come to a termination, it would have to be accomplished through the interactions of the participants and their backers rather than mere expressions of concern by outsiders.

36. Antara, 23 April 1970.
37. See the editorials in *Asahi* and *Sankei*, 19 May 1970.

Chapter II. Cambodia is thrust into the Indochina war

Norodom Sihanouk's Cambodia had been acknowledged by friend and foe alike to be one of contemporary Southeast Asia's international political phenomena. Analysts of Cambodian affairs marveled at Sihanouk's ability to pursue a foreign policy of balance toward hostile neighbors, as he steadfastly insisted that Cambodia's independence would better serve each country's interest than its incorporation in any Asian bloc, whether communist or anticommunist. As the Prince himself put it:

> Our neutrality has been imposed on us by necessity. A glance at the map of our part of the world will show that we are wedged in between two medium-sized nations of the Western bloc and only thinly screened by Laos from the scrutiny of two countries of the Eastern bloc, North Vietnam and the vast People's Republic of China. What choice have we but to try to maintain an equal balance between the "blocs"?[1]

What were the principles by which Cambodia was able during the 1960's to maintain its precarious nonalignment, while the rest of Indochina was swept into the conflagration? An advocate of regional balance in Asia, Sihanouk saw Cambodia as a kind of fulcrum whose position could be adjusted to ensure that neither side obtained too much weight. Consequently, the Prince worked to keep options open to Cambodia for shifting slightly to either side. Despite a growing antipathy toward the United States during the 1960's, the Prince wrote candidly to the *New York Times* in a letter which appeared on June 4, 1965: "I concede again that after the disappearance of the U.S.A. from our region and the victory of the Communist camp, I myself and the People's Socialist Community that I have created would inevitably disappear from the scene."[2] Sihanouk actually held a mirror-image view of the foreign policies of both Vietnams. That is, if they could be believed, both Hanoi and Saigon would prefer to occupy Cambodia; consequently, Cambodia must appeal to the backers of both Vietnams in order to insure its independence.

The Prince was impressed by Chinese behavior at the 1954 Geneva Conference, where Chou En-lai persuaded the Victminh to withdraw from the areas they had occupied in Cambodia in exchange for a cease-fire and the exclusion of any U.S. military intervention. The establishment of the Seventeenth Parallel as the demarcation line between the two Vietnams also meant that Cambodia and North Vietnam would not share a common border; some 200 miles would separate them. Therefore, if the DRV de-

1. Cited in Michael Leifer, *Cambodia: The Search for Security*, p. 18.
2. Cited in Bernard K. Gordon, "Cambodia: Where Foreign Policy Counts," p. 433.

cided once again to interfere in Cambodia, it would first have to infiltrate South Vietnam or Laos.[3]

The Prince subsequently had occasion to call upon Peking to intervene on Cambodia's behalf with the DRV. In the course of a December 1960 visit to Peking, where a treaty of friendship and nonaggression was signed, the CPR was asked to give assurances that Hanoi would not be permitted to let the Laotian conflict spill over into Cambodia. In exchange, the Prince agreed not to appeal to SEATO for any assistance.[4] When the August 1962 Geneva Conference appeared to settle the Laotian problem, Sihanouk requested and received Peking's endorsement for a similar conference to guarantee the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia.[5]

The Cambodian policy through the 1950's and early 1960's, then, was to place itself in a position enabling it to solicit aid from the cold-war antagonists of whichever country threatened it at any given time.[6] Cambodia's brand of nonalignment, far from abhorring bipolarity, attempted rather to manipulate it, much like the ju-jitsu expert who uses an opponent's own weight to control him. Prince Sihanouk had perfected his balance system by the date of the 1955 Bandung Conference. As a SEATO protocol state, Cambodia received whatever protective value and assistance the treaty organization might provide, but incurred no obligations. At Bandung, Chou even told Sihanouk that China would not object to small-scale U.S. military aid.[7]

Cambodia's major antagonists during the second half of the 1950's were less the Asian communist states than America's allies, South Vietnam and Thailand. Both these countries, each with a substantial ethnic Chinese minority, viewed the growing close relationship between Peking and Phnom Penh as a clandestine source of Chinese influence which could spill over from Cambodia into their own territories. Subsequent antagonism between Thailand/South Vietnam and Cambodia, including repeated South Vietnamese border violations, apparently precipitated the Cambodian decision to establish full diplomatic relations with China in 1958. On the other hand, Prince Sihanouk did not want to see a reorientation of Thailand and South Vietnam toward China, given his premise that Cambodia's independence required a permanent estrangement between Thailand/South Vietnam and the CPR. A rapprochement among these three countries could only harm Cambodia, according to Sihanouk's analysis, by removing Chinese constraints over what appeared to be possible Thai irredentism. The Prince

3. Robert F. Randle, *Geneva: 1954,* p. 482.
4. Harold C. Hinton, *Communist China in World Politics,* p. 356.
5. Hinton, pp. 426–28.
6. Except where otherwise indicated, most of the material for this analysis is drawn from Leifer, *Cambodia: The Search for Security,* and Roger M. Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy.*
7. Leifer, *Cambodia,* p. 64.

calculated that China would prefer a weak, independent Cambodia to a unified Indochina whose capability for resisting the will of its gigantic northern neighbor would be enhanced.[8]

By the early 1960's, renewed fighting in Laos between the Vietminh-backed Pathet Lao and right wing forces convinced Sihanouk, despite the 1962 Geneva Agreement, that the Indochinese communists were in the ascendant. The Prince changed his diplomatic tack somewhat at this point. Instead of appealing for Western support, as he might have in the 1950's, he solicited China's help in calling for an international conference to recognize Cambodian neutrality and territorial integrity. Although the manifest targets of the proposed conference were South Vietnam and Thailand, such a conference might also have the effect of inhibiting any North Vietnamese designs on Cambodia. Neither the Thais nor the South Vietnamese would agree to the proposed conclave, however, since an agreement would be tantamount to admitting charges of violating the Cambodian border. Nor would the United States support a meeting which would offend its allies. Cambodia in turn rejected an American counterproposal for bilateral talks between Phnom Penh and Saigon and Bangkok. Sihanouk figured that without big-power guarantees, agreements among the states of the region would be worthless.[9] Moreover, American reticence to support the Cambodian proposal reinforced Sihanouk's opinion that South Vietnam and Thailand were subordinate to the United States and acting as its agents in Indochina —a perception that was bound to move Cambodia closer to China and North Vietnam in the course of time.

During 1963–64, some of Sihanouk's fears concerning Cambodia's inadvertent involvement in the Vietnam war were realized as Viet Cong forces were pursued into eastern Cambodian border areas by ARVN troops. The Prince urged to no avail that an international force to oversee the border be established to control the Vietnamese spillover. Bilateral talks with the United States in Delhi during December 1964 stalled on Cambodia's insistence that only Washington could elicit a South Vietnamese decision to recognize Cambodia's territorial integrity. American contentions that the issues between Cambodia and South Vietnam were bilateral were dismissed by Prince Sihanouk as further evidence that the United States was unwilling to help guarantee Cambodia's neutrality. Some kind of international guarantee for Cambodia loomed ever larger in Sihanouk's thinking as the only chance of protecting the country's independence if the United States were to withdraw from Indochina. However, border talks with North Vietnam in November 1964 proved similarly unproductive, perhaps in part because the Prince was unwilling to grant formal recognition to either the DRV or the NFLSV at that time. Operating from a position

8. Leifer, *Cambodia*, p. 19.
9. R. M. Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy*, p. 197.

of weakness and consequently basing his diplomacy on the criterion of not unduly antagonizing either side in the Vietnam conflict, the Prince feared that formal recognition of the Vietnamese communists would be followed by intensified border incursions from South Vietnam.[10]

Although the United States and South Vietnam were primarily concerned about the use of the Cambodian border as a sanctuary and corridor for the Vietnamese communists, and the Cambodians were most anxious about incursions from the Americans and South Vietnamese, their problems were functionally identical. Neither party was able to secure the border by military means, and both were unable to find acceptable diplomatic guarantees to prevent its violation.

Cambodian hopes that the Vietnamese communists would be more accommodating to Sihanouk's neutrality proposals were dashed at the Indochinese Peoples' Conference held in Phnom Penh in February 1965. The Prince planned to use the conference to obtain broad support for a plan to recognize the neutrality of both Cambodia and South Vietnam under the assumption that a neutral and disengaged South Vietnam would threaten neither China nor the DRV. However, representatives of both North Vietnam and the NFLSV threatened to walk out of the conference if Sihanouk delivered an address advocating the neutralization of South Vietnam.[11]

The coup de grâce to Sihanouk's hopes for diplomatic neutralization occurred soon after the disappointing Indochinese Peoples' Conference when a proposal by Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States to convene a special Geneva conference on Cambodia foundered on North Vietnam's and China's insistence that South Vietnam be represented solely by the NFLSV. Prince Sihanouk concluded that his maneuverability had been greatly attenuated and that he must opt for what he believed to be the winning side: China and North Vietnam. As a first step, Cambodia severed diplomatic relations with the United States on May 3, 1965.[12]

By mid-1965 it appeared that Sihanouk foresaw a communist victory in Vietnam despite the infusion of U.S. forces. Because Cambodia was obviously not strong enough to withstand a Vietnamese communist onslaught itself and also because the Prince did not relish a repetition of the sanguinary Vietnamese civil war on his soil, Cambodia could not follow the same kind of fulcrum policy it had so effectively articulated up to the mid-1960's. To have called on the United States for protection in mid-1965 probably would have guaranteed protracted armed conflict within Cambodia. Therefore Prince Sihanouk chose the opposite strategy by

10. R. M. Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy,* pp. 213–15, and Leifer, *Cambodia,* pp. 156–58.
11. Leifer, *Cambodia,* pp. 162–63.
12. Ibid., pp. 166–69.

severing relations with the United States and embarking upon a major propaganda campaign against South Vietnam. Sihanouk was attempting to prove to both Hanoi and Peking that Cambodian territory would not be used by their adversaries to obstruct the DRV war effort; hence, there was no need to involve Cambodia in the hostilities. As further evidence of his good intentions, the Prince established in Phnom Penh in 1966 a permanent secretariat of the Indochinese Peoples' Conference which included representatives of the DRV, NFLSV, and Pathet Lao. These representatives became de facto diplomatic missions one year before full diplomatic relations were established with Hanoi and some three years before complete diplomatic ties with the PRGSV.

A limited attempt to strike a balance once again in early 1966 aborted when the USSR refused a joint Cambodian-British request to enlarge International Control Commission border patrols for the purpose of inhibiting increased Viet Cong utilization of eastern Cambodia for sanctuary from American search-and-destroy maneuvers. The Russian refusal, representing a wish not to antagonize North Vietnam, probably reinforced Sihanouk's belief that Cambodia, as a weak nonaligned state, would have to articulate its security interests in such a manner that the larger-power antagonists would view them at worst as distasteful but tolerable (the United States and to a less extent the RVN) and at best as a kind of tacit support (the DRV and China). In this manner, Sihanouk hoped, Cambodia could maintain its neutrality—even though an uneasy one, frequently violated—pending a resolution of the Vietnam war.

As the war escalated after 1966, however, both the geography of the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos and more and more effective American military pressures against the Viet Cong further eroded Cambodia's neutral status. North Vietnamese forces began to carve infiltration branches of the Ho Chi Minh route through eastern Cambodia; and beleaguered Viet Cong forces were increasingly driven to seek refuge across the Cambodian border.

In order to make sure of a sanctuary safe from Cambodian as well as American harassment, the Viet Cong probably encouraged a series of communist insurrections in the eastern Cambodian provinces of Battambang, Kompong Speu, Kompot, Koh Kong, and Rattanakiri during 1967 and 1968. Sihanouk may well have felt himself betrayed by the Vietnamese communists at this point, for he had believed that both the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Forces, in exchange for propaganda and diplomatic support, had agreed to Cambodia's version of its frontiers and their inviolability. When, however, he saw that besides seeking sanctuary the Vietnamese communists seemed to be abetting a Cambodian insurgency, Sihanouk countered by abruptly moving away from the communist side and spoke openly for the first time of Vietnamese communists

fighting his government. The Prince even publicized, in November 1968, six captured North Vietnamese soldiers who were returned to NLF representatives in the glare of full media publicity.[13] Captured propaganda materials in the insurgent provinces revealed Vietminh tracts similar in content to those used in Cambodia prior to the withdrawal of Vietminh forces in 1954.[14] By early 1969, news correspondents estimated that some five communist divisions (30,000 to 50,000 troops) had operational bases in eastern Cambodia.[15]

Sihanouk's disillusion with Vietnamese communist attestations of good will and respect for his country's territorial boundaries was eloquently put in a press conference on May 23, 1968:

> It is true that we have a guarantee from China, the NFLSV, and the DRV, who have pledged not to bother Cambodia. You must remember, however, that the NFLSV has already relinquished the role of sole representative of South Vietnam and has created another force. . . . And this force will subsequently dissolve itself to give birth to another regime. Thus, we will have to run after them to obtain unanimous recognition of our frontiers because they will take turns.
>
> You have surely noted that the Thai Patriotic Front and the Pathet Lao have consistently refused to recognize our frontiers. Thus, even if Vietnam and China keep their promise, there is nothing to stop Thai communists and Laotian communists, who depend on Peking and Hanoi respectively. . . . The Viet Minh have recognized our frontiers. But if they want to come to Cambodia, they have only to direct the Pathet Lao to conquer Cambodia. . . .[16]

In aggravation of their territorial concerns, Cambodian officials saw important elements of their economy diverted to serve communist needs. According to Donald Kirk, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong relied heavily on Cambodian rice supplies from 1965. Most of these supplies were provided by Chinese merchants through black-market outlets and hence were lost as a source of foreign exchange. This loss was reflected in rice earnings, which dropped from nearly $36 million in 1965 to less than $10 million by 1969.[17]

Sihanouk's concern over Cambodia's deteriorating economic position as well as the growing problem of insurgency in the late 1960's led to two important moves on his part. Michael Leifer reported that Phnom Penh

13. For a discussion of these events, see Richard T. Butwell, *Southeast Asia Today—and Tomorrow*, pp. 87–89, 122, 220.
14. Roger M. Smith, "Cambodia: Between Scylla and Charybdis," p. 75.
15. Butwell, p. 89.
16. Cited in Bernard K. Gordon, "Cambodia: Shadow Over Angkor," pp. 63–64.
17. Donald Kirk, "Cambodia's Economic Crisis," pp. 238–39.

diplomatic sources agreed that the Prince decided to close the port of Sihanoukville as an entrepôt for Vietnamese communist supplies in 1969.[18] And on August 12, 1969, he appointed Lon Nol once again as prime minister of a new "Government of Salvation," explicitly charged with the task of economic rehabilitation.

The appointment of Lon Nol capped an internal political trend that began in 1966 and appeared to undercut much of Sihanouk's carefully cultivated leftist foreign-policy orientation. Prior to that date the Prince hand-picked all national assemblymen on the basis of personal loyalty and statist economic predilections. The latter orientation, however, had led to economic stagnation by the middle of the decade, and this persuaded him to punish the incumbent assemblymen by refusing to endorse any candidate in the elections. The result was a right-wing sweep in the legislative branch, based heavily on a multiple-candidate district election arrangement in which landowners were able to obtain a larger number of votes than ever before, The only three leftists elected (Hu Nim, Hou Yuon, and Khieu Sampham) were subsequently accused of revolutionary agitation, forced out of office, and probably driven to flee to the eastern insurgent areas.[19] (They would reappear later as key Cambodia-located members of the FUNK and Sihanouk's RGNUC after the regime change of March 1970.)

Cambodian leftists responded to what they perceived as a right-wing preemption of government. They increased their insurgency in Kompong Chom and Battambang provinces, with Vietminh cooperation. Some analysts interpreted the renewal of what had been relatively dormant opposition to Prince Sihanouk as a function of a feeling among the Vietminh and Khmer Rouges that since progressives were no longer politically influential in Phnom Penh, the communists no longer needed to act with discretion in the countryside. By 1967–68, under Vietnamese communist direction, counteradministrations to the central government's were established in the eastern provinces. These developments placed the Prince in an ultimately untenable position, since both his policy of nonalignment and Cambodia's territorial integrity were being flagrantly violated. According to leftist journalist Wilfred Burchett, some six resistance centers had been created in Cambodia by 1967, from which the embryo of a "liberation army" was formed.[20]

Prior to 1970, this "liberation army" consisted primarily of small bands of northern hill minorities—the Khmer Loeu—roaming the hilly areas of

18. Michael Leifer, "Peace and War in Cambodia," p. 73.

19. R. M. Smith, "Cambodia Between Scylla and Charybdis," p. 73. For a thorough background discussion of the conflict between the countryside and Phnom Penh in this period, see Daniel Roy, "The Coup in Phnom Penh," in Gettleman, *Conflict in Indochina*, pp. 344–56.

20. Wilfred G. Burchett, *The Second Indochina War*, p. 68.

Stung Treng and Rattanakiri provinces and maintaining contacts with Viet Cong and Pathet Lao forces across the Laotian border. Khmer Rouge forces operated in Svay Rieng and Prey Veng provinces adjacent to Vietnam's Tay Ninh province. They had clearly been organized by the NLF and used as supply points for its forays into Vietnam.[21] Nevertheless, the absence of regular Vietminh units in the Cambodian insurgent areas demonstrated that the communists were uninterested in turning tribal and local dissidence into an externally managed civil war at that time.

Lon Nol's response to the Vietminh challenge differed sharply from Sihanouk's. The former embarked on a program of denationalizing the economy and encouraging foreign investment. Sihanouk tried unsuccessfully to block these changes in December 1969, fearing that they would further enrage the Vietnamese communists and China, to whom the Prince wished to appeal directly. Far from moderating the government's attack on the left, however, Lon Nol pressed further to hurt the Viet Cong specifically, by demonetizing all old 500-riel notes, thus depriving the Vietnamese communists of the currency they had accumulated for rice purchases.[22] An earlier May visit by Lon Nol to Hanoi had apparently convinced him that the Vietminh were not prepared to relinquish their occupation of portions of Rattanakiri, Mondulkiri, and Stung Treng provinces.[23]

By the end of 1969, however, Lon Nol and the Prince temporarily appeared to be working in tandem. While the Prince openly accused Hanoi of "Vietnamizing our territory," Lon Nol renewed Cambodian participation in such Western-oriented international groupings as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank.[24] In a series of articles appearing in the Prince's party organ *Le Sangkum* in December 1969, Sihanouk urged the United States to arm Southeast Asian national armies and remain in the region, for "unless a miracle happens, our country will be absorbed by Asian communism."[25] At the same time he closed the port of Sihanoukville to Viet Cong supplies.[26] During this period Sihanouk also apparently agreed to the unacknowledged American air bombardment of eastern Cambodia.

Despite this apparent agreement on the source and nature of the communist threat, at least two eminent students of Cambodian politics have argued that Lon Nol and Sirik Matak concluded sometime in 1969 that

21. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 15 Jan. 1970, pp. 26–27; T. D. Allman, "Cambodia: And Nowhere Else to Go," ibid., 5 Feb. 1970, pp. 23–25; and *La Renaissance du Bessin* (France), 20 Aug. 1971, p. 5, cited in the *Republic* (Ann Arbor), Nov. 1971, p. 6.
22. Kirk, pp. 244–45.
23. Gordon and Young, "Cambodia: Following the Leader?" p. 173.
24. Ibid.
25. Cited in Girling, "Crisis and Conflict in Cambodia," pp. 354–55.
26. Leifer, "Peace and War in Cambodia," p. 73.

Sihanouk would have to be removed in order to deal effectively with Cambodia's political and economic troubles.[27] Sirik Matak—a longtime rival of the Prince from an equally prestigious Cambodian family—concurred with General Lon Nol that military action was required to convince the Viet Cong that their hold on Cambodian territory was unacceptable. Some months prior to Sihanouk's actual ouster Lon Nol and his supporters succeeded in dismissing several pro-Sihanouk staff officers from the upper ranks of the military. This seemed to pave the way for a major Cambodian thrust into the eastern provinces in what was to prove a misconceived attempt at dislodging the Viet Cong and their local allies.

The Prince himself realized that Cambodia's military ability to move against the Vietnamese communist enclaves was simply insufficient. He planned instead to appeal directly to Soviet and Chinese leaders to persuade their Vietnamese allies that unless they withdrew from Cambodia entirely or at least reduced their activities to the early 1967 level, the likelihood of a full expansion of the Vietnam war into Cambodia, with its attendant requirement of dispersing North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, would increase. Sihanouk, at a minimum, probably asked Lon Nol to postpone any military decisions until after the Prince had visited the USSR and China to present his case.

According to Leifer, however, Lon Nol and Sirik Matak had decided even before Sihanouk's diplomatic journey that the communist presence would be used as the precipitating factor to oust the Prince.[28] It is not evident whether Sihanouk's opponents had any conception of what a confrontation with the Prince or the communists would entail. Perhaps fearful that Sihanouk would side with the communists and oust them all from their positions, the national assembly was convened and the Prince expelled by a general vote.

The Viet Cong proved to be an exploitable symbol of external aggression around which nationalist sentiment could be rallied—at least temporarily. When Sirik Matak took over the Information Ministry in January 1970, anti-Vietnamese-communist propaganda in the official press sharply accelerated.[29] However, with the overthrow of the Prince, one of the last fetters restraining the Vietnamese communists was broken. Vietminh/Viet Cong forces no longer had to concern themselves with Sihanouk's carefully forged left-leaning nonalignment which rendered any move against Cambodia a public embarrassment to them. A new Cambodian

27. The following discussion is based on Roy, "The Coup in Phnom Penh," pp. 354–56, and Leifer, "Peace and War in Cambodia," pp. 59–61.

28. Leifer, "Peace and War in Cambodia," pp. 59–60. For a somewhat different interpretation of Lon Nol and Sirik Matak's willingness to compromise before Sihanouk went to Moscow, see A. J. Langguth, "Dear Prince: Since You Went Away . . . ," *New York Times Magazine*, 2 Aug. 1970, p. 44.

29. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 June 1970, p. 28.

regime had come to power with an already established reputation for anti-communism, prepared to take on the Vietnamese as a foreign aggressor. Lon Nol appeared ready in retrospect to sacrifice what was left of Cambodian noninvolvement in the Vietnam war for the kind of nationalist appeal he may have felt necessary to legitimate his rule.

Insurgency and its meaning for Cambodia

The Cambodian war was in some points much like the war in Vietnam: there was some indigenous support for the insurgents, who were at least partly natives themselves, and there was a central government which exercised only limited control outside the major urban centers. Thus, as in Vietnam, counterinsurgent forces were at a disadvantage in Cambodia. The United States, as the major backer of the Lon Nol government, found itself once again involved in a situation in which its enemy needed only to sustain a presence and gradually raise the financial and political costs to the American government.

From the insurgents' viewpoint, a guerrilla war is a war of attrition in which no decisive military victory is necessary or probable against a strong, foreign opponent. The strategy rather is to inflict such heavy losses that the adversary's political costs for maintaining its posture will become unacceptable.

From the military standpoint, the United States could probably have continued its support of the Phnom Penh regime indefinitely, because the scale of the American contribution to the Cambodian conflict was considerably less than $1 billion annually, including the cost of U.S. bombing.[30] The political costs of the war, however, appeared more determinative, particularly since it was viewed by the U.S. Congress as well as many members of the administration as merely an extension of the Vietnam action. Hence, the pressure to end the conflict on all sides may have been more political than economic—a part of a general pattern of disengagement.

Despite domestic political pressures on the United States to disengage, however, it was uncertain whether the U.S. government would come to such a decision, which would virtually reverse prior American responses to externally supported, communist-led revolution. As I. William Zartman put it:

> As long as revolutionaries feel justified in banding together across state lines, their opponents can justify similar actions as defensive counterintervention. Such counterjustification is inherent in the process of intervention: active revolutionaries as well as beleaguered con-

30. J. L. S. Girling, "Nixon's 'Algeria'—Doctrine and Disengagement in Indochina," p. 541.

> servatives claim that they are merely responding in kind. The revolutionaries justify their action as a continuing answer to the . . . reassertion of imperialism [and] cannot admit that the opposing attitude is also a legitimate expression of indigenous needs and interests. It must be [rather] the result of foreign influence, i.e., of prior but extra-regional intervention.[31]

The situation Zartman outlines seems to fit the Cambodian war experience in which the Americans and South Vietnamese intervened to maintain the Phnom Penh authorities in order to prohibit a North Vietnamese/Viet Cong flanking enclosure of South Vietnam. The latter, in turn, justified the pro-Sihanouk insurgency as a *restorative* liberation war (to be discussed in detail below). This was a new wrinkle in North Vietnam's "national liberation" repertoire, tailored to fit the fact that the Vietnamese-communist-directed insurgency in Cambodia was ostensibly under the control of Prince Sihanouk and for the purpose of restoring him to power in Phnom Penh. (The nature of such a "restored" government, however, is a major subject for analysis later in this study.)

The North Vietnamese seem to have adapted and transferred the organization of their own successful war of independence to the Cambodian insurgency. The military was organized in three layers. The lowest layer was *guerrilla units* utilized primarily at the village level and composed as much as possible of Cambodian nationals. These units interacted regularly with village organizations. The next layer consisted of *regional forces* led by Vietnamese communist cadres and responsible for controlling activities of transportation and supply, as well as harassing Phnom Penh and South Vietnamese forces, but usually only in conjunction with units of the *regular North Vietnam army*—the third layer—which were charged with overall strategic planning and major engagements with the enemy. The three layers were interdependent, the guerrillas serving to establish safe base havens, and the regional and regular forces operating to expand them.[32] Since the bulk of insurgent action occurred at the village level, where Cambodian supporters of Sihanouk and Vietnamese communists cooperated and also where the notion of legal national boundaries was meaningless, the belief inculcated by Phnom Penh authorities that the insurgency was primarily North Vietnamese imperialism may not have been as effective as some national leaders hoped. As Ruth McVey pointed out, until 1970 and under Prince Sihanouk, Cambodia—unlike Laos and South Vietnam—had been

31. I. William Zartman, "Intervention Among Developing States," p. 191.

32. Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, pp. 45, 46, 96, 122. The application of the three-layered organization to Cambodia is discussed below. For a specific reference to its presence in the Cambodian insurgency, see the joint communiqué between the DRV and Sihanouk's RGNUC/FUNK carried by Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency (VNA), 17 Nov. 1971.

able to prevent North Vietnamese support from linking up with Khmer Rouge domestic dissidents. Sihanouk's exile and his subsequent support for the insurgents he had so readily contained while head of state visited upon Cambodia precisely the kind of external intervention the Prince had theretofore avoided.[33]

Contemporary analysts of guerrilla warfare agree that a successful insurgency requires (a) mass support correlated with an alienation of large numbers of the population from the central government; (b) an insurgent ability to *outadminister* the central government in the rural areas; (c) the *selective* use of terror to demonstrate negative sanctions for noncompliance; (d) highly visible and immediately beneficial social reforms—especially land redistribution—to demonstrate the benefits available for joining the insurgents. The objective of an insurgency is to destroy the established authority patterns and substitute new ones from the villages upward. Insurgents may actually encourage the incumbent government to rely on outside support and firepower through what the Americans dubbed "search and destroy operations." Adapted from conventional warfare tactics, these actions would include aerial attacks and the fire of artillery and even heavy individual weapons such as mortars and bazookas to "pacify" an area or village where insurgents have been spotted. Utilization of this "defensive" strategy, however, aids the guerrillas in their prime objective of discrediting the government and its allies and alienating the population by destroying any sense of personal security.[34] Yet, American domestic political constraints imposed by the Congress required that insofar as there was an American military component of the Phnom Penh response to insurgency it had to be limited to air and logistics operations. The limitation on American participation contributed, then, to an employment of the most dysfunctional and destructive counterguerrilla strategy available.

Leites and Wolf have conceptualized guerrilla rebellion in systems-analysis terms. They contend that an insurgency can best be understood by examining its supply conditions, conversion mechanisms, and outputs into the population at large (see Fig. 2.1). According to Leites and Wolf's analysis, the rebels' purpose in disrupting established patterns of authority is to acquire the inputs necessary to substitute their authority for the government's. Hence, if the national authorities can interdict the inputs into the insurgency and disrupt its organization, then the rebels must devote more of their own resources to rebuilding production facilities and restoring organi-

33. Ruth T. McVey, "Communism in Southeast Asia," in Dan Jacobs, ed., *The New Communisms* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

34. For a summary of these characteristics, see Eqbal Ahmad, "Revolutionary Warfare and Counterinsurgency," in Miller and Ava, eds, *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World,* p. 145; see also Walter C. Soderlund, "An Analysis of the Guerrilla Insurgency," p. 346.

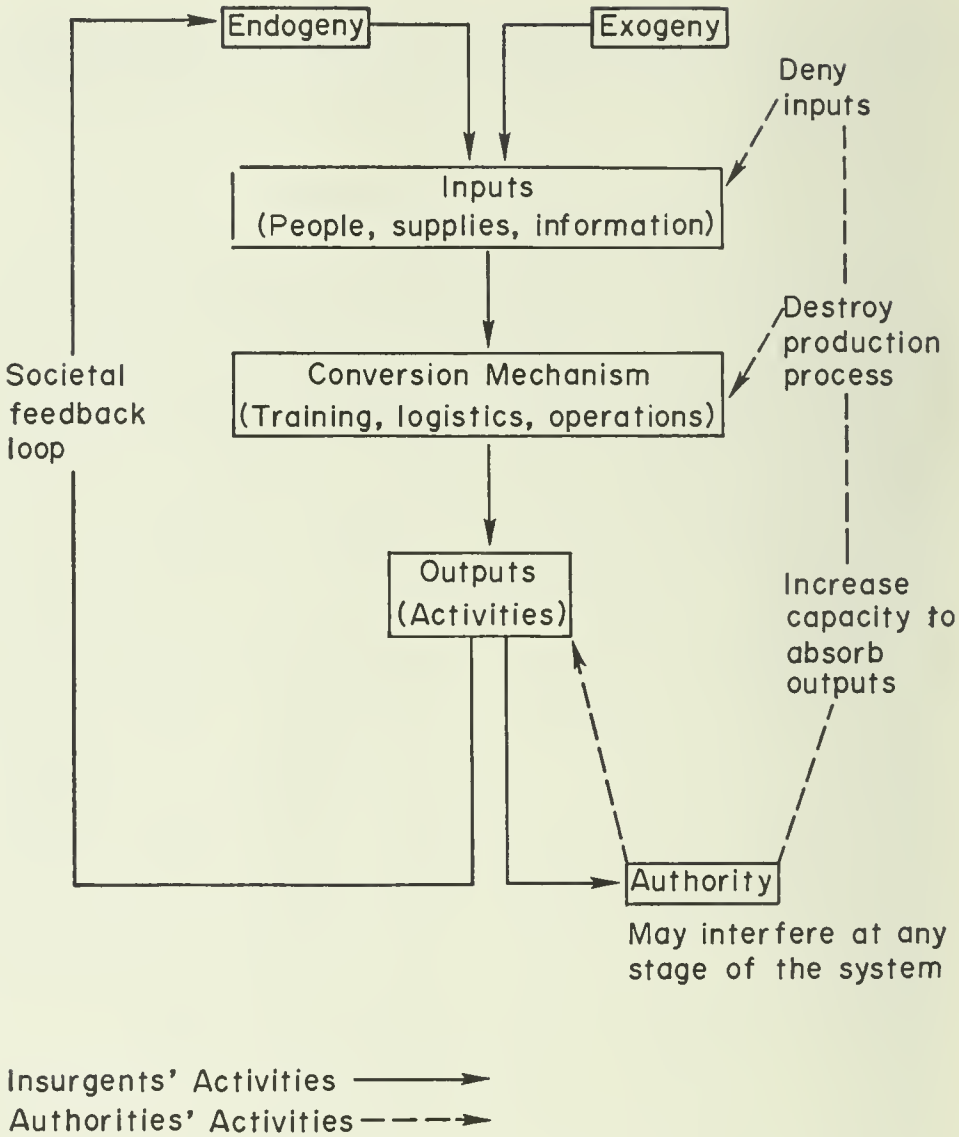

Fig. 2.1 The Insurgency System

zation; less will be available for military outputs.[35] It would be instructive to see whether Lon Nol's strategy followed the advice of Leites and Wolf; for if the insurgency can be contained over time, prospects for a negotiated settlement will obviously be better than in a situation in which the rebels are obtaining more inputs, expanding their production facilities, and producing more territorial gains and population adherence over time. Unfortunately for Phnom Penh, the latter situation prevailed in Cambodia by the spring of 1973.

35. Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority*, pp. 35, 84.

The Lon Nol government's response to the insurgency could have been multifaceted. It could include the physical occupation of the more densely populated areas of Cambodia so as to deny both people and information to the FUNK and Vietnamese communists. It could include efforts to disrupt base and training areas in order to break up the organizational structure of the insurgency, although such an effort would be particularly difficult to realize, given the safe support territory available outside to the insurgents in Vietnam and communist-controlled sections of Laos. And it could include the buildup of a Cambodian military force capable of confronting enemy forces in a conventional battle situation. In fact, all three responses to the insurgency were assayed by Phnom Penh with very limited success (to be discussed below).

Beyond the insurgency's local prospects, however, there are other determination factors. In the Cambodian case, they included the heavy dependence of both the Khmer Republic and the RGNUC/FUNK respectively on the United States/ARVN and the Vietnamese communists for both economic and military assistance. Indeed, the ground-force potential for both sides was heavily Vietnamese rather than Cambodian, with much of the fighting being done by Vietnamese troops for both contenders on Cambodian soil. The Cambodian war's tie-in to the war in Vietnam meant that it was much more than a local insurgency. It was also a part of the more general conflict for an Indochina sphere of control by North Vietnam and the concomitant American attempt to deny that sphere. Although each Cambodian adversary remained heavily dependent on an external mentor (one indication that the Cambodian conflict was a proxy war), each also claimed to be defending nonalignment, undoubtedly to enhance respective claims to legitimacy. So long as outside forces determined the level of violence in Cambodia, however, it was virtually impossible for either Lon Nol or Sihanouk to reach a separate accommodation. In effect, the Vietnamese communists and an American-backed South Vietnam could veto any settlement for Cambodia. By the middle of 1972, however, one knowledgeable American analyst argues, the Vietnamese communists had reduced their role in the insurgency to the maintenance of eastern Cambodian sanctuaries and the supply of technical advice to what had become a predominantly Khmer Rouge military force.[36]

36. Samuel Adams, "The Identity of America's Foe in Cambodia," *Daily American* (Rome), 7 July 1973, reprinted from the *Wall Street Journal.*

Chapter III. The Lon Nol government

Turning to the Khmer Republic at Phnom Penh, one is first struck by the somewhat parallel problems facing the Phnom Penh and the Saigon governments in proving legitimacy. As a competitor for the political allegiance of the Cambodian population, the Lon Nol government portrayed itself as more independent, more supportive of societal needs, and more open to popular participation than the adversary and its Vietnamese communist backers, while, in fact, manifesting equal dependence itself on American and ARVN supplies, military support, and training.

Perhaps one can infer the salience of issues to a government by the attention devoted to them in official media. An elementary thematic analysis of Radio Phnom Penh transcripts as translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, from April 1970 to October 1972, breaks down into five general issue categories as shown in Table 3.1. Each of these issues will be discussed in terms of the Lon Nol government's perceptions and policy reactions. Several of the themes, of course, overlap. For example, reactions to Vietnamese communist military activities are frequently linked to Phnom Penh's relations with American and South Vietnamese military forces. For purposes of this analysis, however, the theme issues are analytically separated; therefore, some duplication of event analysis cannot be avoided; however, different actor perspectives will be provided for events with multiple perceptual settings.

Opposition to Vietnamese communist actions on Cambodian territory

Chapter II presents the background of Vietnamese communist involvement in the eastern provinces of Cambodia up to the regime change in March 1970. Actions by the Lon Nol/Sirik Matak leadership to confront the communist forces in their sanctuaries began on March 8 while the Prince was in Paris and a full ten days before his ouster. Government-organized demonstrations against the occupation of Cambodian border areas on that day were followed by the much more serious acts of sacking the DRV and PRGSV embassies in Phnom Penh on March 11. The next day Phnom Penh Radio broadcast a message from Sihanouk, deploring the actions against the Vietnamese communist embassies and charging that they were "premeditated . . . by persons who want to irremediably destroy Cambodia's friendship with the socialist camp and to throw our country into the hands of an imperialist and capitalist power." Sihanouk stated he was returning home "to speak to the nation and army and to ask them to make a choice. If they choose to follow these personages on a road which will make Cambodia a second Laos, then let them permit me to resign." The Prince, however, did not return.

Table 3.1. *Frequency rank-ordering of issues carried by Phnom Penh media from April 1970 through October 1972, as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service* Asia and Pacific Daily Report[a]

Theme issue	*Rank*	*Number*
Opposition to Vietnamese communist actions on Cambodian territory	1	54
Relations with the United States and ARVN, with the subordinate theme of the maintenance of Cambodia's own independence	2	50
Concern over mutual racial atrocities between ethnic Vietnamese and Cambodians	3	21
The state of the economy and society as a whole	4	14
A general discrediting of Prince Sihanouk and his RGNUC	5	11

[a] The unit of analysis is the whole broadcast or newspaper transcript. Only those transcripts were selected which were primarily concerned with the Cambodian war. The total number of transcripts given here would be considered only an approximation because the *Daily Reports* do not provide as complete coverage of noncommunist media as they do of communist media. Hence, the exact numbers in each category provide only a rough rank-order relationship.

On March 16 the only known meeting among representatives of Cambodia, the DRV, and PRGSV took place, ostensibly to discuss the troop withdrawals of the latter two. However, the day before that meeting, Cambodian forces had already requested and received ARVN artillery support for an assault on some of the eastern enclaves. And on March 17 an ARVN task force penetrated some one and a half kilometers into Cambodia.[1]

Cognizant of its own military weakness and strongly desirous of maintaining a neutral status despite the confrontation, the Cambodian government appealed vainly to the cochairmen of the International Control Commission to reactivate their operations in the eastern Cambodian border areas.[2] Lon Nol also called upon the Vietnamese and Chinese to meet again to discuss the border situation—with no apparent response, despite promises of compensation for damages to the embassies.[3]

Cambodian officials conceded that all provinces adjacent to South Vietnam—from the Mondulkiri and Rattanakiri regions in the north to the coastal area—were under Viet Cong occupation and accused Vietnamese communist troops of penetrating deeply into Cambodia in mid-April 1970. On April 14, these actions elicited the first government appeal for "un-

1. These events are documented in U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Cambodia: May 1970, a Staff Report* (Washington, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1970), pp. 1–2.
2. Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 21 March 1970.
3. Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 22 and 27 March 1970

conditional foreign aid from all sources for national safety."[4] Because the appeal was directed to all countries, Cambodian officials argued, it did not mark a change in the government's neutrality policy. By April 19, however, communist forces seized Sang, a town only twenty miles from Phnom Penh. Perhaps foreseeing the possibility of a direct attack on the capital, on April 21 Lon Nol sent an appeal directly to the United States for aid, specifically requesting large amounts of equipment and the active support of the American-trained ethnic Cambodian special forces in Vietnam (Khmer Krom).[5] Thus, between March 30 and April 15, the Lon Nol government had moved from a position of requesting no foreign troops to one of asking for large-scale American and South Vietnamese material support and Vietnamese-based and trained forces. Actions against Vietnamese communist troops, who would not give up their sanctuaries voluntarily, required that Cambodia move militarily into the South Vietnamese/American camp.

Peking may have tried to forestall such a polarization of Indochinese politics. Lon Nol explained in mid-May that the Chinese government did not break diplomatic relations with Phnom Penh immediately, despite Sihanouk's presence in Peking. Rather, Chinese diplomats sought out the new Cambodian leader and promised to consider the deposition of the Prince an internal Cambodian affair if the Khmer government would (a) continue to permit the supply of arms and medicine from China to reach Vietnamese communist troops, (b) continue to permit communist sanctuaries in Cambodian territory, and (c) continue to provide propaganda support for the communist side. According to Lon Nol, these representations were made several times up to May 5, 1970, when the Chinese apparently decided they would not gain satisfaction, broke diplomatic relations with Cambodia, and formally recognized Sihanouk.[6] If Lon Nol's remarks are accurate, they suggest that Peking was more interested in maintaining a friendly, independent Cambodia than in helping to bring about Vietnamese communist control of that country. The latter course of action may have been reluctantly chosen as the only available alternative for China's higher-priority objective: seeing the Vietminh through to a victory in Vietnam.

By late June 1970 and despite the ARVN/American intervention (to be discussed in detail in Chapter VII) Cambodian troops withdrew from their last garrison in Rattanakiri, leaving the four northeastern provinces—the linchpin of the communist supply route into Cambodia—entirely in enemy hands. Over the course of the next three years, the Cambodian government had its hands full merely maintaining supply flows between such major cities as Phnom Penh, Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) and the northern rice-growing area of Battambang. Cambodian officials admitted in Decem-

4. Salvation Government Statement, Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 14 April 1970.
5. J. L. S. Girling, "Crisis and Conflict in Cambodia," p. 362.
6. Lon Nol, address, on the Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 11 May 1970.

ber 1971 that some two-thirds of their territory was under Vietnamese communist control, but insisted that these areas were sparsely inhabited, holding only 25 percent of the country's population.[7] Beginning in 1973, Phnom Penh officials no longer mentioned how much of the country they controlled.

Despite overwhelming Vietnamese communist military superiority, Phnom Penh forces made limited gains in recapturing some areas under Vietminh control during the 1971 rainy seasons. Even Sihanouk's clandestine radio grudgingly admitted that "the Phnom Penh traitors took advantage of the rainy season to launch pacification operations, to infiltrate into some parts of the liberated areas, to clear some strategically important traffic arteries, and to prevent eventual attacks by the CPLAF."[8] Cambodian military tactics, however, appeared to be playing into the hands of the North Vietnamese insofar as they destroyed the very people and villages they were "liberating." And, during 1972, Phnom Penh's military position in the countryside greatly deteriorated in the face of Vietminh and Khmer Rouge consolidation.

Unlike Vietnam, where most of the action was in sparsely populated rural or jungle regions, the Cambodian struggle occurred around large towns on major highways in heavily populated areas. North Vietnamese commanders appeared primarily concerned with protecting new supply routes into Vietnam and only secondarily with cutting supply lines into Phnom Penh, although the latter effort increased considerably in 1972. The communist tactics were to draw Cambodian fire into villages, then to pull back and permit government forces to occupy a scene of death, destruction, and new additions to the ever-growing stream of refugees, who constituted an additional burden on the hard-pressed regime.[9] After the January 1973 Vietnam cease-fire, major communist attacks on both water and road routes into Phnom Penh forced the Khmer Republic Army into a totally defensive posture.

Cambodian drives, like that of August–December 1971, the Chenla II operation to keep open important routes among the cities of central Cambodia, were adroitly ambushed by North Vietnamese forces, which withdrew along the lines of communication until Phnom Penh troops became overextended and then intervened to cut them apart, isolate the detached military units, and overcome them.[10] Lon Nol's own account of the Chenla II episode claimed that it was initially successful in reestablishing lines of communication with Kompong Thom but was later interdicted when the

7. Sirik Matak, interview in *Le Monde,* 3 Dec. 1971.

8. Cambodian Information Agency in French, 8 Oct. 1971.

9. Arnold Abrams, "The Terrible Thing . . . ," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 5 Dec. 1970.

10. See Hanoi's explanation of its strategy in defeating Chenla II broadcast by Hanoi Domestic Service in Vietnamese, 8 Dec. 1971.

Vietnamese communists sent "huge reinforcements" from the provinces they control east of the Mekong River. "The High Command did not have enough reserve troops, nor did it have enough helicopters to transport reserve troops."[11] Insofar as Phnom Penh leaders perceived their military difficulties primarily in terms of inadequate supplies and manpower, their policy response seemed to be additional requests for training and more sophisticated equipment with which to balance the enemy's qualitative edge and superior field position.

By the spring of 1973, Western observers estimated that the Phnom Penh government controlled only a third of the country's territory and some 60 percent of the population, while the Cambodian insurgents under Vietnamese communist direction were capable of mounting multibattalion operations.[12]

In sum, it appears that Cambodian leaders came to view their conflict with the Sihanouk-backed Vietnamese and Khmer communist forces in essentially military terms, with a consequently diminished interest in any political solution short of full-scale victory. As will be demonstrated below, American and South Vietnamese military leaders reinforced these Cambodian predilections, for their own purposes.

Cambodian orientations toward the United States and the Republic of Vietnam

Second in salience only to its opposition to Vietminh incursions for the Cambodian leadership have been its relations with the United States and with South Vietnamese military forces. Indeed, the only way to fend off the Vietnamese communists, Cambodian leaders believed, was to establish a supply source from the United States and to coordinate military maneuvers with Saigon. Heavy dependence on both Vietnam war protagonists, however, carries a considerable political cost—the credibility of continued Cambodian protestations of neutrality. A U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report summed up the situation succinctly at the close of 1970:

> The Cambodian Army . . . and Cambodian Air Force are completely dependent on the U.S. military assistance program, on the captured weapons and war material provided by the South Vietnamese, on the tens of thousands of Cambodian Army personnel in Vietnam (and, in smaller numbers, in Thailand) [for training], on ARVN operations in the eastern and southeastern parts of Cambodia,

11. Lon Nol statement on Chenla II broadcast by Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 9 Dec. 1971.
12. *Christian Science Monitor,* 27 March 1973.

and on the air support provided by the United States and South Vietnamese Air Forces.[13]

This dependence on the United States and ARVN did not come about immediately on the deposition of Sihanouk, although soon thereafter steps were taken to reestablish good relations with Washington and Saigon as well as another American ally, Thailand. By the end of March 1970, for example, Lon Nol returned the American freighter *Columbia Eagle,* which had been apprehended by Cambodian forces during Sihanouk's rule when it strayed into Cambodian waters.[14] Relations with Thailand and the Republic of Korea were renewed by the end of May, along with an agreement by Bangkok to render military-equipment support.[15] The weakness of the Cambodian military, however—cultivated over the years by Prince Sihanouk to demonstrate his nonbelligerence toward Cambodia's neighbors—meant that the new government, even with increased supplies, could hope for barely more than to stop a concerted communist attempt to seize Phnom Penh. The only way to stop the Vietnamese communists from anything short of taking the capital was to call in South Vietnamese and American firepower.

A Cambodian delegation, led by the foreign minister, Yem Sambaur, visited Saigon in late May 1970, during the course of the U.S./ARVN intervention in eastern Cambodia. While praising South Vietnam's military foray into the eastern provinces as an action founded on "mutual interests, sincere reciprocal confidence, and respect for Cambodia's sovereignty and territorial integrity," he nevertheless included in the joint communiqué a provision "that the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam, which have come with the consent of the Cambodian government to help Cambodian troops chase out the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces, will withdraw from Cambodia as soon as their mission is carried out."[16]

The ambivalence of Cambodia's attitude toward the U.S./ARVN intervention was undoubtedly a product of relief at seeing other better-equipped forces assume a large portion of the burden of fighting the Vietminh/Viet Cong on Cambodian soil, combined with the belief that this action represented some kind of American commitment to the survival of the Lon Nol government. On the other hand, however, there was considerable uneasiness over the large numbers of South Vietnamese troops engaged in the eastern provinces and the disturbing result of battles which did not drive Vietnamese communists back into Vietnam but rather further west and deeper into

13. U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Cambodia: December 1970, a Staff Report* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Dec. 1970), p. 1.
14. Agence France Presse (AFP), 30 March 1970.
15. Phnom Penh Domestic Service and the *Bangkok Post,* 29 May 1970.
16. Joint communiqué between Cambodia and the Republic of Vietnam, carried by *Cambodge,* 30 May 1970.

Cambodia, ultimately increasing the pressure on Phnom Penh itself. A kind of vicious circle developed, for when South Vietnamese forces intervened, Vietnamese communist forces relocated their supply lines closer to Phnom Penh and west of the Mekong, which in turn led to more Cambodian requests for American and South Vietnamese aid.

Although the United States specified in its invasion decision that "it was not assuming a commitment to the military defense of the Cambodian government," subsequent military aid and training programs belied that assertion. And although Cambodian and American officials repeatedly insisted on Cambodia's neutrality, the term came to possess little real meaning in a situation where the United States and South Vietnam were serving as the major sources of military support, firepower, advisers, and training to the Phnom Penh government. With a combination of American, South Vietnamese, and Thai support, the Cambodian army expanded from 40,000 men in March 1970 to some 200,000 by January 1971.[17]

From mid-1970, South Vietnamese troops patrolled much of the eastern Cambodian countryside, which meant in effect that major confrontations were being held between Saigon forces and their Vietminh/Viet Cong adversaries on Cambodian soil—the final touch to demonstrate that the Cambodian war had become an extension of the Vietnam conflagration. In addition, according to civilian observers, several thousand ARVN personnel provided all logistics and most of the planning for Cambodian forces, flying guns and ammunition in to Phnom Penh and providing helicopters and advisers for Cambodian assault missions.[18] Combined Cambodian/South Vietnamese operations began in late 1970 and continued intermittently to clear the environs of the capital from communist forces which seemed increasingly able to roam the countryside at will.[19] During the spring of 1973, when Phnom Penh was once more surrounded, Saigon did not respond, however, probably because it needed all its forces on its home soil.

Although the Phnom Penh regime was ostensibly committed to replacing all South Vietnamese troops with Cambodians, the limited manpower potential of the country and the ability of the Vietnamese communists to move large numbers of troops through southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia meant that the government's viability was mortgaged to South Vietnam's willingness to intervene when necessary to balance Vietminh/Viet Cong forces. This happened in November and December 1971 during Phnom

17. For a U.S. government attempt to rationalize continued Cambodian "neutrality" despite an acknowledged dependence on American supplies and training support, see William P. Rogers, *United States Foreign Policy, 1969–1970,* Department of State Publication 8575 (Washington, March 1971), pp. 53–54.

18. T. D. Allman, "Cambodia: Into an Iceberg War," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 23 July 1970, p. 17.

19. François Nivolon, "Running on the Spot," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 5 Dec. 1970, pp. 14, 15.

Penh's Chenla II operation (described above) when Cambodian officials were forced to call in South Vietnamese troops and artillery to reopen supply routes to Khmer forces which had been cut off by North Vietnamese units interdicting Route 6 between Phnom Penh and the agricultural northern region. By September 1972 Vietnamese communist sapper units were able to attack the environs of Phnom Penh at will, forcing Khmer Republic authorities to retain their military units close to the capital, so that most of the countryside was left open to Vietminh and Khmer Rouge political organization. Appeals to the United States for stepped-up military assistance were only partially answered, however, both because the U.S. commitment to Cambodia was constrained by congressional strictures and because U.S. officials grew disillusioned over the extent of corruption in Phnom Penh's civil and military leadership.[20]

While Lon Nol's government was unable to display a convincing posture of military independence, it tried to compensate in the diplomatic field by maintaining its ties with all states, including communist governments, providing the latter were willing. As Sirik Matak put it in an address on August 10, 1971, to the National Press Club in Washington:

> Our external policy . . . remains fundamentally based on neutrality, the only conceivable attitude for a country like ours. Thus, we do not seek to integratc ourselves in any bloc or any alliance, whichever it be, and we ask from other countries nothing other than the respect of our neutrality, independenee, and territorial integrity within the limit of our actual frontiers. We are ready, on our part, to maintain friendly relations with the greatest number of countries possible, without discrimination.

Phnom Penh officials were gratified by the Soviet decision to maintain its embassy, despite propaganda support in Soviet media for Sihanouk's liberation front. Cambodian officials from time to time reported the continuation of small-scale Soviet aid agreements, including the arrival of technical-assistance specialists and even military trucks.[21] However, Russian relations with the Lon Nol government were probably more a sign of its displeasure at Sihanouk's heavy dependence on Peking than of any belief that the Cambodian government would defeat its Vietnamese communist adversaries. Furthermore, Phnom Penh's diplomatic position suffered a blow when its delegation was turned down in favor of Sihanouk's in August 1972 at the

20. Examples of Khmer Republic appeals for additional support may be found in Lon Nol's Second Anniversary Message of the Republic, Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 9 Oct. 1972, and an earlier radio commentary on 15 July 1972. Acknowledgment of the corruption problem by Phnom Penh Radio on 25 Sept. 1972 occurred in its broadcast of the presidential cabinet communiqué. For an analysis of the political implications of corruption, see the *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 1 July 1972, p. 24.

21. *Sankei* (Tokyo), 1 Nov. 1970; and Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 19 Oct. 1971.

Georgetown conference of foreign ministers of the nonaligned states. (The seating of either delegation suggests that the notion of *nonalignment* has become very flexible indeed!)

Despite attempts to balance primary dependence on the United States and its allies, the Lon Nol government clearly moved Cambodia away from the left-leaning definition of neutrality which characterized the Sihanouk era and into what was for Cambodia a new regional political and economic orientation. Phnom Penh reaffiliated with the International Monetary Fund, which provided advice on the country's financial troubles. It also joined the Asian Development Bank. As Deputy Premier Sirik Matak put it:

> We consider regional cooperation a very important means of promoting future progress in Cambodia at a time when common efforts are necessary for all the countries of Southeast Asia which wish to raise the standards of living of their populations, and to better secure their independence in the face of the menace of Asian communism. We will thus join in regional cooperation in all forms with all countries in our region, especially our nearest neighbors.[22]

From the viewpoint of the Phnom Penh government, American and South Vietnamese military and economic assistance were essential for survival. Perhaps with the South Vietnamese example of total dependence on one side of a polarized conflict in mind, however, Khmer Republic leaders frequently stressed through diplomatic channels their intentions of maintaining formal neutrality (no alliance memberships) and relations with Soviet-oriented communist states. They further insisted that South Vietnamese forces and American advisers would be asked to leave Cambodian territory as soon as the Vietnamese communists returned to their country. But therein lies the rub. So long as the forces engaged in most of the fighting were Vietnamese on both sides, the Cambodian conflict remained an adjunct to the Vietnam war and beyond the control of whoever might rule Phnom Penh.

Nor did the termination of the American military intervention in Vietnam after the January 1973 Paris Accord exert a salutary impact on the Cambodian hostilities. To the contrary, because ARVN became totally involved in maintaining Saigon's territorial control, only increased application of American airpower obstructed the seemingly inexorable advance of an estimated 50,000 Khmer Rouge forces over a decreasingly effective Khmer Republic army. U.S. aircraft conducted some 240 sorties daily between mid-March and mid-August 1973, when the U.S. Congress prohibited any further American bombing. Although the raids succeeded

22. *Réalités Cambodgiennes,* 5 Feb. 1971, as translated in the *Republic* (Ann Arbor), May/June 1971, p. 8.

temporarily in interdicting communist supplies and troop concentrations, they also added to Phnom Penh's myriad difficulties by bringing some 700,000 refugees to Cambodia's already overcrowded cities. See the *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 14 May 1973, p. 19, and 21 May 1973, p. 37.

Mutual racial atrocities between Vietnamese and Cambodians

The alliance between the Republic of Vietnam and Cambodia was uneasy from the beginning. Traditional ethnic animosity was coupled with the belief, on the part of Cambodian leaders, that most of the country's 400,000 Vietnamese (out of a total population of seven million) supported the communists. Cambodian ambivalence was heightened by the fact that Vietnamese constituted both the major ally and the enemy. The first manifestation of ethnic antagonism in the Cambodian conflict erupted on April 9, 1970, as Khmer troops killed some 89 ethnic Vietnamese in the Prasaut area of Svay Rieng. Both the South and North Vietnam foreign ministries reacted to the killings.[23] Cambodia avoided a direct reply to the protests, but indirectly justified the army's actions by claiming that defense posts in the area had been "attacked by Viet Cong–North Vietnamese forces supported by local Vietnamese residents."[24] A Phnom Penh government communiqué inflamed anti-Vietnamese sentiment further by charging "that due to the deep penetration into our territory by the invaders, the Vietnamese nationals in Cambodia, notably those in Phnom Penh, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kandal, Kompong Chom, Takeo, and Kompot, have been actively supporting the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese."[25]

Statements like this, broadcast throughout the countryside, served to legitimate mass atrocities against thousands of resident Vietnamese, uprooting them from their homes, forcing them into detention areas, and even massacring them. South Vietnamese President Thieu tried to calm the wave of revulsion that swept South Vietnam at the reports of Vietnamese bodies floating down the Mekong River by insisting that Phnom Penh authorities did not endorse the atrocities. He noted, however, that the writ of the Cambodian government did not run in much of the countryside. Hence, Phnom Penh could not effectively check the depradations. "Moreover," he continued, "since the Khmer people were motivated by a propaganda of enmity between Khmers and Vietnamese, it would be impossible to change their minds in one or two months. Therefore, I have decided to return [to

23. U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Cambodia: May 1970,* p. 3; and a DRV Foreign Ministry Statement carried by Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency (VNA), 12 April 1970.

24. Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 12 April 1970.

25. Cambodian government communiqué carried by Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 20 April 1970.

South Vietnam] all the 64,000 Vietnamese nationals now regrouped in Phnom Penh."[26]

By mid-August, according to Western sources, over 100,000 Vietnamese had been repatriated by convoy down the Mekong to Vietnam, and perhaps another 100,000 had fled on their own.[27] The Vietnamese exodus gutted the middle ranks of Cambodian society of many of its most talented artisans and merchants. On the other hand, their departure had the salutary effect of lowering the level of tension between Cambodians and their South Vietnamese allies, at least temporarily. Those Vietnamese who chose to remain in Cambodia found their activities circumscribed by legal restrictions designed to ensure that they did not cooperate with the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. The 20,000 Vietnamese in the capital were not permitted to move outside it, while Vietnamese in the villages were forbidden to cross provincial boundaries. They were further prohibited from practicing some eighteen occupations and professions, ranging from cycle driving and barbering to medicine and law. Finally, Vietnamese schools were closed and publications banned.[28]

Actions against Vietnamese civilians, moreover, probably exacerbated the ARVN's own behavior toward the Cambodians it was allegedly protecting. Cambodians complained bitterly of South Vietnamese troops behaving like an occupation army rather than allies, through the use of indiscriminate firepower against villages in the eastern provinces. There were even reports of ARVN and Cambodian troops exchanging fire.[29] One Western newsman, who covered the early period of the Cambodian war extensively, reported witnessing ARVN soldiers walking off with personal possessions of the Cambodians in villages they traversed, including, in one case, the municipal rice reserve.[30]

Officials at the upper levels of both governments attempted to contain these animosities, with only limited success. A high-level Cambodian démarche to Saigon in May 1970 led to an ARVN command to its troops that anyone engaging in "reprehensible acts" against the Khmer population would be "tried by military courts" and "liable to summary execution."[31]

Protests continued to be lodged by Cambodian authorities against South Vietnamese forces throughout 1971, however, for incidents against both the general populace and the armed forces—in one case including even short skirmishes with Phnom Penh Military Police around the Government

26. Address by President Nguyen Van Thieu, Saigon Domestic Service, 27 June 1970.

27. Reuter, 13 Aug. 1970.

28. *New York Times*, 14 Nov. 1971.

29. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 Aug. 1970, p. 13.

30. Richard Dudman, *Forty Days with the Enemy*, p. 65.

31. ARVN Order reported in a Cambodian Information Ministry communiqué, carried by Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 30 May 1971.

Palace.[32] It was friction of this nature which led the Cambodians to ask that South Vietnamese forces confine their activities to Cambodian areas near the RVN border rather than continue to engage regularly in joint operations with Cambodian troops throughout the country. Apprehensions about South Vietnamese behavior similarly delayed a Cambodian request for ARVN military assistance when the Chenla II operation became bogged down against North Vietnamese forces in mid-November 1971. Nevertheless, the Cambodian army's inexperience and ineptitude led to the necessity of a virtual permanent ARVN presence both in parts of eastern Cambodia against Vietnamese communist enclaves and, in the course of 1972, closer to Phnom Penh itself to defend against sapper attacks on the capital. Again in April 1973, even after the formal cease-fire agreement in Vietnam, ARVN forces crossed the Cambodian border to ease Vietnamese communist pressure on the Mekong River and adjacent roads into Phnom Penh.

A kind of three-way ethnic animosity inhibited effective military cooperation between Cambodia and South Vietnam. Cambodian mistrust of ethnic Vietnamese reinforced South Vietnam's cavalier and condescending attitude toward Cambodians, while the armed forces of neither side seemed to trust the other—the ARVN viewing Cambodia as an undertrained, undersupplied rabble, and the Khmer troops viewing ARVN as a patronizing occupation force much too ready to use firepower against Cambodian villages.

The state of the economy and society

A fourth theme running through Cambodia's media output concerns the effect of the conflict on social cohesion and economic production. A deliberate tactic of the Vietnamese communists subsequent to the American/South Vietnamese intervention was to cut the major highways leading into Phnom Penh in order to interdict the flow of raw materials and processed goods necessary to keep the small industrial sector of the economy operating.[33] Rubber and timber exports halted because the main forest areas in the four northeastern provinces were occupied by the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese. By 1971 the government estimated a $136 million production and export loss from damaged plants and interrupted transport, along with a budget deficit estimated at 10,000 million riels, incurred by the costs of an army which grew from 35,000 in March 1970 to some 200,000 by late 1971. The inevitable result was a heavy inflation—a price rise in most commodities of between 50 and 100 percent.[34] High pay, relative to other jobs in the economy, for an army of close to 200,000 disoriented the Cambodian economy

32. Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 31 Jan. 1971.
33. See Sihanouk's Ninth Message to the Khmer Nation, NCNA, 5 Oct. 1970.
34. Judith Coburn, "Cambodia's Fighting Riel," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 Nov. 1971, p. 34.

by raising the government budget and employment level while lowering productive activity. Manpower was transferred from the economy to the military. A repetition of the unhappy experiences of Saigon seemed to be occurring; there, between 1963 and 1965, the RNV budget doubled and the currency in circulation rose by 400 percent.[35]

A certain degree of military corruption has also hurt the civilian economy as well as the lower ranks of the military. Although probably exaggerated, the following account from Sihanouk in Peking appears basically accurate in its essentials and is drawn from a report in *Le Monde:*

> [The lot of the Lonnolite soldier is] mediocre, the modest monthly pay of 1700 riels is neither offered regularly nor in full. . . . "Provisions will arrive in a few days," an officer promised his soldiers who had nothing to eat. The lot of non-commissioned officers is more enviable. The officers can make a fortune. A former primary school teacher who became "quartermaster general" in charge of pay and logistics of a battalion, boasted of having made several thousand riels in a few months. His life had changed: he had exchanged his wooden house for a luxurious apartment house and given up his modest Honda cycle for a gleaming Mercedes and kept a Vietnamese concubine. "Why don't you do the same?" he asked one of his colleagues who remains a civilian. The secret of this rapid fortune is easily explained: the "quartermaster general" shares with the leader of the battalion the pay of the dead or deserted soldiers when the death or desertion has not been reported.[36]

Cambodian officials came to rely on an American underwriting of the war economy by 1971, through a commodity aid program but also through a multinational, IMF-backed Economic Support Fund into which a variety of foreign countries were asked to deposit their currencies, increasing the local foreign exchange and in effect underwriting the riel, the supply of which increased some 123 percent in eighteen months after the regime change.[37]

As the war dragged on, Lon Nol's major base of popular support—intellectuals and urban salaried classes—eroded through the deleterious effects of inflation and an increasingly repressive regime. That the marshal gained only 55 percent of the votes cast in the June 1972 presidential election, despite irregularities in his favor, provided further evidence of wide-

35. Philip Dion, "Back to Square One," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 14 Aug. 1971, p. 19.

36. Sihanouk's Twenty-Third Message to the Khmer Nation: Part III, carried by NCNA, 18 May 1971.

37. Dion, "Back to Square One," and T. D. Allman, "Purchase of a Nation," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 7 Aug. 1971, pp. 61–62.

spread dissatisfaction over the war's course.[38] The defection of substantial numbers of Phnom Penh's administrative elites to the FUNK—a major Front media theme during 1972—could go a long way toward destroying the Khmer Republic from within.

The rapid rise in market prices was also a function of the stream of refugees swelling the population of Phnom Penh and other Cambodian cities. Vice-Premier Sirik Matak told a Japanese correspondent that the capital's population had tripled between March 1970 and March 1971 at a time when the transportation of goods from much of the countryside had been curtailed.[39] The Vietnamese communist tactic appeared to be to discredit Phnom Penh's ability to provide for the basic welfare of even the capital's population, thus undermining national morale. The severe rice shortage in Phnom Penh during August–September 1972 was a direct result of Vietminh interdiction of supply lines to Saigon and Battambang. By late 1972 Cambodia was importing most of its rice from the United States and Thailand (*Far Eastern Economic Review,* 21 May 1973, p. 37).

Outside observers attributed most of the refugees, numbering over two million despite the exclusion of some 200,000 ethnic Vietnamese who fled the country, not so much to the activities of communist-led forces but rather to American and ARVN air and artillery bombardment, which leveled villages, rendering them uninhabitable.[40] Even Cambodian media reported glowingly on the use of artillery and air power to "pound the enemy camps . . . inflicting heavy losses on the communists" who took refuge in Cambodian communes. "Our gunners . . . shelled these communes on the nights of 7–8 August, killing or wounding many communists." The fate of the resident population and their dwellings, however, was not mentioned in these reports.[41] Similarly, Prince Sihanouk charged, after his month-long visit to the "liberated area" of eastern Cambodia in March 1973, that daily U.S. B-52 raids had destroyed villages and civilians more than they had hampered the insurgent forces.[42]

The discrediting of Prince Sihanouk

Cambodian media gave the least attention, among the five identifiable themes, to the direet discrediting of Prince Sihanouk's Peking and Hanoi-

38. See Boris Bacyanskyj, "Lon Nol's Private War," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 1 July 1972, pp. 23–24.

39. *Mainichi* (Tokyo) 13 March 1971.

40. *New York Times,* 21 March 1971, and in the same paper a report of a General Accounting Office study prepared for the U.S. Congress on the Cambodian refugee problem, 5 Dec. 1971.

41. Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 9 Aug. 1971, is typical of governmental news releases stressing the advantages of firepower without acknowledging the social costs.

42. Sihanouk's speech at a DRV reception honoring his month's visit to Cambodia, as reported in VNA, 10 April 1973.

backed "liberation movement." Relatively slight media attention, however, need not mean low salience in this case, since the Lon Nol government was bent on thwarting the legitimacy of Sihanouk's exile position. One way of achieving this was simply to ignore the Prince and condemn instead the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops who were operating in his name. And as pointed out above, Vietnamese communist operations did constitute the primary concern of Phnom Penh's media.

Not surprisingly, the broadcasts and articles devoted directly to defaming Sihanouk occurred immediately after his ouster and tapered off to near zero by mid-summer 1970. Soon after his arrival in Peking the Prince was charged with having turned "completely Red by forsaking nationalism entirely and even calling on the Vietnamese to come to attack us. He is a traitor to the nation and is residing abroad."[43]

The indictment and trial of the Prince in absentia for treason was staged by the Lon Nol government in the summer of 1970 to undercut publicly his major claim to fame—his ability to maintain Cambodia's nonalignment. Evidence was produced to show that Sihanouk had agreed to the installation of Viet Cong sanctuaries throughout eastern Cambodia and even around the Angkor temple complex. He was also accused of misappropriating state funds and ruining the national economy through statist policies "in order to deliver up the country to the communists."[44] Although many of the "charges" were undoubtedly true, the actions taken by the Prince were implemented at the time with the full knowledge of his post–March 1970 successors *cum* prosecutors. They were indeed implemented for the express purpose of forestalling even greater Vietnamese communist encroachments on Cambodian territory. If Cambodian soil was surrendered to Vietnamese communist occupiers, it was a result of the exigencies of the Vietnam war rather than any invitation by the Prince. Cambodia's bargaining ability with the Vietminh and Viet Cong could serve only to limit their presence on Cambodian terrain, but could not exclude it entirely.

By employing an analysis of thematic content of expressions of attitude toward the Cambodian war in Phnom Penh media from March 1970 to October 1972, it has been possible to infer what the attitudinal dimensions are for the Lon Nol regime and which issues matter more and which less—their "salience." This approach has resulted in a number of distortions, however. (a) No attempt has been made to assess factional breakdowns within the Phnom Penh leadership—evidenced, for example, in the dismissal of In Tam in September 1971 and of Lon Nol's first foreign minister, Yem Sambaur, somewhat earlier—and whether these factions hold different policy

43. Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 26 March 1970.

44. See Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 4 July 1970, and the AFP reports of 3 and 5 July 1970.

positions toward the war. Nor is there an analysis of the creation of a collegial political council in April 1973 in which In Tam was reinstated and Lon Nol's position weakened in hope that such an internal change would render the Phnom Penh government better able to negotiate with the insurgents. Rather, the Phnom Penh position, as developed through the media analysis, has been viewed as a unit. The decisional process itself remains beyond the ken of available data. (b) Media output does not always exactly mirror policy itself. It may provide post hoc rationalization for actions taken on grounds which have not been disclosed to the public. (c) Finally, media output may actually be designed to mislead its audience or for morale purposes, to persuade it that action is being taken to meet a challenge when, in fact, no action has been taken at all. The foregoing caveats warn both the analyst and the reader about the severe limitations of propaganda as a primary data source. Nevertheless, if one is interested less in actual policy than in the substantive *concerns* and *attitudes* of those who make policy, careful analysis of the mass media as perceptual indicators of the leadership's concerns is warranted.

Returning to the theme issues discussed in this chapter, one can summarize as follows. The Lon Nol government appeared to perceive Vietnamese communist enclaves in eastern Cambodia as an unacceptable affront to national integrity and a convenient excuse to remove an increasingly recalcitrant and seemingly pro-communist Prince Sihanouk from power. (Perhaps Cambodian military leaders had been paradoxically so beguiled by Sihanouk's insistence that Cambodia's nonalignment must be respected that they were willing to cross the line of military hostilities which Sihanouk knew must be avoided if the nonalignment policy was to remain effective.) For Sihanouk, the tactics of nonalignment were limited to diplomatic persuasion against the drawing of Cambodia into an Indochina-wide war. His generals, however, seemed to believe that nonalignment could be sustained through military force and reliance upon one of the antagonistic poles in the conflict.

The second most frequently mentioned theme related to the country's new allies—the United States and South Vietnam. Once a policy of military defense was chosen, Saigon was seen as the primary backer for military force and the United States as the major supplier of war matériel, economic assistance, and training support. The political costs of accepting American and ARVN support, however, were threefold: (a) an almost total military dependence on the United States and the ARVN undermined the credibility of Phnom Penh's avowed policy of nonalignment; (b) large-scale Vietnamese military operations in Cambodia rekindled ethnic animosities between Khmers and Vietnamese, the only solution to which would seem to be the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces; and (c) there was no assurance that, once the Vietnam segment of the Indochina war was terminated, either

Saigon or Washington would be willing to continue activities in support of Phnom Penh.

The third mass-media theme—racial conflict between Cambodians and Vietnamese—brought Phnom Penh's policy dilemma sharply into focus: to maintain the Khmer Republic's military viability required reliance on ARVN incursions and even a South Vietnamese takeover of eastern Cambodian border posts, which in turn led to a de facto South Vietnam occupation of parts of Svay Rieng province. ARVN military activities, however, exacerbated ethnic incidents between the two peoples. The ensuing dilemma was found in the fact that if the Lon Nol Government called on the South Vietnamese to withdraw, their communist counterparts could occupy the country at will.

A fourth concern in Phnom Penh media was the debilitating effect of the war on social and economic stability. Vietnamese communist strategy concentrated on the isolation of urban centers and cutting of supplies, which created economic pressures on the population and subsequently social turmoil for the government. Large numbers of refugees, resulting in the main from American/ARVN/Cambodian air and artillery barrages, multiplied the problems of feeding, housing, and employing an expanded urban population.

The last identifiable theme in Phnom Penh media devoted to the war dealt with the discrediting of Sihanouk by picturing him as a pawn of the Vietnamese communist aggressors. It is interesting to note that neither the propaganda directed against the Prince nor that against Hanoi and the Viet Cong included China as a particular target. China's support of both Sihanouk and the DRV was ignored for the most part in Cambodian media, perhaps in hopes of ultimately working out a settlement in which Peking could play a restraining role toward Phnom Penh's Vietnamese adversaries.

Chapter IV. Sihanouk's National Front

There is a kind of symmetry between the two antagonists for Cambodian leadership in that both were dependent on external Vietnamese military support—openly sought and acknowledged by Phnom Penh, but only infrequently admitted by Sihanouk and almost never by officials of the RGNUC, ostensibly acting in his name. The differences between Sihanouk's statements and those emanating from the resident officials of his insurgency (to be discussed below) implied different attitudes toward the legitimacy of the insurgent movement. The Prince may have reasoned that a North-Vietnamese-controlled insurgency, with Cambodian fellow travelers in leadership positions, would ultimately make his country a mere colony of Vietnam. Therefore, to judiciously publicize the Vietnamese communist presence—especially to foreign newsmen—constituted a form of subtle pressure on the North Vietnamese to withdraw from Cambodia once the Indochina war was terminated. The Cambodian insurgent *countergovernment,* however, diminished the role of Vietnamese communist military forces to enhance its own legitimacy as the rightful Cambodian government, cooperating with but independent of the other Indochinese peoples' forces.

This chapter categorizes the theme issues of Sihanouk's statements from Peking and those of the RGNUC which, from March 1971, developed its own broadcast outlet—the Voice of the FUNK and the Cambodian Information Agency (AKI), originating in Stung Treng in northern Cambodia.[1]

The Prince's orientations toward the Vietnamese communists in the three years prior to his overthrow may set in perspective the massively altered circumstances in which he later found himself. Despite his belief that the Vietnamese communists would prove the ultimate victors in Indochina, the Prince operated to keep his country out of the conflict as long as possible. However, in 1967, as the result of a peasant revolt in Battambang province (western Cambodia) brought on by the land grabbing and maladministration of local and central authorities, Vietminh cells left behind since 1954 were reactivated to guide peasant discontent. Sihanouk took to the air waves and toured villages, stumping vigorously in an attempt to contain growing communist appeals. In hopes of discrediting the communists, he revealed theretofore confidential information on unsuccessful efforts to negotiate border agreements with them:

> I must tell you now that the Vietnamese communists and the Viet Cong negotiated with us three or four times but that absolutely nothing came out of the negotiations. They did not sign a pledge of respect for

1. One of the purposes of this analysis, hopefully to be achieved in the last section of the study, is to determine the degree of congruence among the Sihanouk and RGNUC themes, the Phnom Penh and the North Vietnamese/Chinese themes, and official statements about the Cambodian war emanating from U.S. government officials.

> our present frontiers. . . . The second problem is the fact that the pro-Viet Minh Khmer have had the habit of permitting the Viet Minh to come into our country. Formerly, . . . after the French troops left Cambodia, the Viet Minh remained in our country in order to conquer it. How can we have confidence in the Viet Minh? Will we be able to escape falling into their hands once we turn communist? I want the Khmer communists to tell our youths clearly whether or not they are sure they can help us without having the Viet Minh come here as our masters.
>
> . . . I advise our youths to ask the Khmer Reds—that is, the great red intellectuals—to affix their signatures giving assurance they will not fall into Vietnamese hands. Can they assure that the Viet Minh will not come and conquer our country as in 1953 and 1954? At that time we could escape because we came out of the Geneva discussions victorious. But next time where will we go for discussions?[2]

Sihanouk's crackdown on the Cambodian Left and its Vietnamese backers was in part an accommodation to growing right-wing power in the national assembly and the central government. Beyond that, however, there was a genuine fear that the Vietminh and Viet Cong had established base camps adjacent to South Vietnam and were furnishing supplies to the Khmer Rouge. In an unsigned, authoritative editorial, perhaps written by the Prince and certainly published with his approval, a bleak scenario of Cambodia's future under communist domination was drawn:

> The third and last stage of the odious process of subversion will be the "bringing to heel" of our country, either by being forced to become a part of some Indochinese federation dominated by a communist neighbor country, or by remaining theoretically "independent" under a communist regime tightly controlled by a foreign power. On the other hand, it is quite evident that these transformations, which would mark the end of our independence, would necessarily be accompanied by annexations to which the Khmer Reds would hasten to consent. For they are just servile instruments in the hands of their foreign masters, and they will have to pay them a heavy tribute at the expense of our national territorial integrity, to be eventually allowed to take over the sad role of governing a satellite country.[3]

By the end of 1968 and despite Sihanouk's vigorous activities, eleven of Cambodia's nineteen provinces were affected by Khmer Rouge operations, mainly in the east and northeast, but some also in parts of western Cam-

2. Sihanouk, address, Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 9 May 1967.
3. *Réalités Cambodgiennes,* 31 May 1968.

bodia.[4] Sihanouk's apparent inability to deal with the situation through political bargaining with Hanoi was at least partly responsible for his ouster on March 18, 1970. At that time, the strength of the Khmer Rouge guerrillas was generously estimated at a maximum of 3,000. By midsummer, however, outside observers agreed that with the help of the Vietnamese communists, the Khmer Rouge had strengthened its following and political position to become the only well-organized force within the National United Front and certainly the most experienced within its National Liberation Army, providing perhaps 10,000 to 15,000 indigenous troops. And by mid-1972, after the FUNK had operated in much of northern Cambodia for over two years, some U.S. estimates raised the number of Khmer communist forces to as high as 50,000.[5]

Prince Sihanouk's own antipathy toward dependence on any outside power is well documented in an empirical cross-national study of the role conceptions of numerous world political leaders. Within this population, the Prince's self-image—based on a content analysis of his speeches—falls into the categories of *independent* and *isolate*—concerns of the kinds which would best seem to exemplify a nonaligned state.[6] Nevertheless, his ability to maintain that status for his country depended on exploiting the differences among those neighbors whom he viewed as possessing the ability to control Cambodia's destiny. Within the Asian regional context, China came to be seen as a potential "elder brother" who would help to protect Cambodian independence in order to sustain China's own superior status vis-à-vis Vietnam; hence Sihanouk's choice of Peking as his exile home, in hopes of maintaining some semblance of a balance of forces in Cambodia. A balance would insure that no *majority coalition* would form to crush the Prince's hope of reintroducing nonalignment once again in the postwar period. If the Khmer Rouge, "Sihanoukists," Vietnamese communists, and Chinese are viewed as both contending and cooperative partners, then it would be to the Prince's advantage to support as much Chinese influence on the Vietnamese component of the "liberation movement" as possible.[7]

One well-qualified student of Cambodian politics stated, several years before Sihanouk's overthrow and subsequent exile, "As long as Prince

4. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 6 Aug. 1970, p. 57. See also the report of a Phnom Penh white paper documenting Vietminh aggression in the same journal, 13 Feb. 1971, pp. 6–7. For an excellent analysis of Hanoi's relation with the Cambodian Front, see David E. Brown, "Exporting Insurgency: The Communists in Cambodia" in Zasloff and Goodman, *Indochina in Conflict,* pp. 125–36.

5. U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia: January 1972, a Staff Report* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 8 May 1972), p. 8.

6. K. J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," p. 274.

7. For a theoretical statement of maintaining balance within coalitions, see Dina Zinnes, "Coalition Theories and the Balance of Power," in Sven Groennings, et al., *The Study of Coalition Behavior,* p. 359.

Table 4.1. *Frequency ranking of themes dealing with the Sihanoukist Cambodian United Front, as carried by Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese Communist, and Cambodian Information Agency (AKI) media, March 1970–October 1972*[a]

Theme issue	*Rank*	*Number*
Activities of the FUNK and RGNUC	1	70
Attitudes toward the adversaries (Phnom Penh, Saigon, and Washington)	2	55
Relations with the Vietnamese communists	3	26
Relations with Peking	4	19
Differences within the United Front	5	5

[a] The unit of analysis is the whole broadcast transcript; the source is the Foreign Broadcast Information Service *Daily Reports—Chinese People's Republic* and *Asia and Pacific*.

Sihanouk remains at the head of the government, the loyalty of the people, which he has carefully cultivated in his numerous contacts with them, is committed, and any movement to subvert the government will encounter the active opposition of the populace."[8] It has been precisely this consideration which has made Sihanouk such an important figurehead for the United Front—indeed, its primary claim to legitimacy, despite its overwhelming matériel dependence on the Vietminh. But this same dependence has also provided the Prince with the modicum of influence he hopes to be able to wield over the politics of the Front within Cambodia.

We are now prepared to turn to an analysis of the issue themes derived from Sihanouk's message, AKI broadcasts, and RGNUC and FUNK statements as transmitted by North Vietnamese, Viet Cong, Chinese, and, in some cases, North Korean media. It is posited that a substantive analysis of these themes reflects the primary concerns of the Prince and his Cambodian leftist allies. A separate analysis will be made of the Prince's numerous messages to the Khmer nation, to tap more directly his particular views of the conflict and what he believed might be most appealing to his compatriots.

Operations of the FUNK and RGNUC

> To the "Sihanoukist" Khmers, the coup d'état perpetrated against me . . . as well as the intervention by the United States and its allies in

8. Roger M. Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy*, p. 224.

> favor of the fascist Phnom Penh regime . . . left no alternative, on the national level, but to reconcile themselves to and make common cause with the "Red Khmers," and, on the international level, to ally themselves in a "common front" with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the revolutionary government and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and the Lao Patriotic Front.[9]
>
> . . . it is necessary to show that the Royal Government of National Union is not a phantom government, as is pretended by some. It heads a real state possessing an army, an administration installed in the liberated areas, and three ministers leading the resistance on the spot on behalf of that government.[10]

The Prince's decision not to return to Cambodia after Lon Nol's open confrontation with the Vietnamese communists during Sihanouk's absence meant that he would be faced with two major problems if he was to regain his authority. The first involved the formation of an alliance which would provide both the manpower and matériel needed to overthrow the new Phnom Penh regime. The second, in effect, grew out of the first: the necessity of creating an indigenous "liberation movement" to operate in his name and offset the imperialist stigma of such heavy dependence upon outside (Vietminh) military forces.

As early as March 22, 1970, NCNA carried a statement by the Prince asserting that "my duty is to participate in the sacred struggle our people will wage from inside and outside the country to obliterate this coup d'état [and] restore legality and democracy." The following day, in a statement released to AFP for worldwide dissemination, the Prince "dissolved" the Lon Nol government on grounds of high treason and announced the formation of a "national liberation army" whose activities "will be waged in common with the other popular and anti-imperialist forces of the brother countries." The Prince urged that all anti-American elements, regardless of political predilections, flock to the banner of "a new government of national unity . . . composed of tradesmen, industrialists, military men, policemen, provincial guards, youths, intellectuals, functionaries, and women." And he promised to provide "ammunition and even new weapons."[11]

On March 23 Sihanouk announced that the Cambodian liberation army's activities would be "carried on together with other anti-imperialist forces of fraternal countries."[12] A DRV government statement issued on March 25 validated the Prince's remarks by assuring full North Vietnamese coopera-

9. Norodom Sihanouk, "The Future of Cambodia," *Foreign Affairs* 49, no. 1 (Oct. 1970), p. 6.

10. Norodom Sihanouk, interview in *L'Humanité* (Paris), 10 June 1970.

11. Sihanouk, Message to Her Majesty the Queen and the Khmer People, carried by Radio Peking in Cambodian, 23 March 1970.

12. NCNA, 24 March 1970.

tion with the Cambodian "liberation movement." (North Vietnamese motivation in sponsoring the FUNK is discussed below in Chapter V.) The Prince tacitly admitted the difficulty of controlling the insurgency from his location in Peking, but apparently he hoped to transmit directives and receive information directly from its Cambodian participants—as distinct from Vietnamese forces—at periodic conferences, "when the representatives of all Khmer circles of the resistance inside and outside the country meet."[13] Although appropriately enthusiastic about the Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples held in China's Kwangtung province in late April 1970, which officially created an Indochina-wide communist front against the United States, Sihanouk was also aware that the new movement could mask North Vietnamese imperialism. He pointedly told Chou En-lai at a celebration banquet for the Indochina conclave that "the liberation of our country should be essentially the work of the Khmers. We rely and will rely above all on our own forces, efforts, and sacrifices . . . to defeat the enemy and recapture our capital, Phnom Penh."[14]

Toward that end, the Prince released an extensive statement entitled *Political Program of the National United Front of Kampuchea* which served as a basic declaration of his intentions for the "liberation movement" being prosecuted in his name. The foreign-policy section of the document underscored the importance of maintaining Cambodia's nonalignment despite "concerted efforts with Laos and Vietnam to make Indochina genuinely a zone of independence, peace, and progress."[15] In order to lend credibility to Sihanouk's insistence on Cambodia's independence within the Indochina front, the Prince had to overcome the allegation that he was merely the figurehead leader of a government-in-exile. Thus, he announced in mid-May 1970 the presence of "three government members who are leading our armed forces at home."[16] The identity of these RGNUC leaders was subsequently revealed; they were three former national-assembly leftists (Khieu Samphan, Hou Youn, and Hu Nim) who had been dismissed from the legislature under rightists' pressure in 1967 (some had even thought of them as having been executed under Sihanouk's orders). They subsequently fled to the Viet Cong controlled areas of eastern Cambodia. A close association with Vietnamese communist cells

13. Sihanouk, Message to the Khmer Nation, carried by Radio Peking in Cambodian, 21 April 1970.

14. Sihanouk, banquet address to Chou En-lai, NCNA, 2 May 1970. It was not until the Indochinese Peoples' Summit Conference that Hanoi endorsed Sihanouk's titular leadership of the FUNK. See D. E. Brown, p. 127.

15. *Political Program of the National United Front of Kampuchea,* NCNA, 5 May 1970.

16. NCNA, 11 May 1970. By August 1972 Sihanouk declared that eleven of his twenty-one cabinet ministers were resident in Cambodia and that ten of these were Khmer Rouges. Sihanouk, interview in *Jeune Afrique* (Paris), 26 Aug. 1972, pp. 36–39.

in that region prior to Sihanouk's overthrow and their controlling positions within the resident "liberation movement"—Khieu Samphan being vice-premier and defense minister and Hou Youn being minister of interior in charge of political affairs in the "liberated areas"—suggested that Sihanouk's resident officials were more inclined toward the Vietnamese communists than he may have wished. Indeed, by late 1970 refugee reports suggested that under Khieu Samphan's leadership, Sihanouk supporters were systematically purged from the upper levels of the FUNK, while pro-Sihanouk propaganda diminished in the villages.[17]

Resident "liberation" leaders faced two tasks. The first was to take and hold territory; and the second was to govern it effectively.[18] Toward the first end, FUNK leaders publicized the development of "the Cambodia People's Liberation Armed Forces" (CPLAF) with categories of militia/guerrilla, regional, and regular troops.[19] The CPLAF structure clearly reflected its North Vietnamese origins, particularly its debt to General Giap, whose military organization for the Vietnam People's Army (VPA) struggle against the French was adopted for the Cambodian effort. Giap contended that a successful anticolonial liberation war was essentially peasant-based and organized in three layers, successively expanding in geographical scope and military capability. The first layer consisted of guerrilla units whose task was to maintain safe base retreats in already liberated areas. These units would engage in normal agricultural and trade activities most of the time in order to supply the next military layer: the regional forces. Regional forces ranged away from local base areas in order to expand the liberated zone. They tended to be full-time soldiers, but were differentiated from the more highly trained professionals who formed the regular troops, the last layer. These were the military cutting edge of the liberation movement, operating directly in enemy territory to interdict its logistics and do battle with its forces. The directional line of General Giap's warfare was to move from the guerrilla stage to the mobile-warfare stage, while maintaining each preceding organization.[20] Ideally, the base-level guerrilla forces would be voluntarily supported by the bulk of a region's population. In the 1945–54 war against the French, voluntarist support was achieved through land reform in which Vietminh forces gave a heavily tenanted population title to the property it had worked for absentee or plantation landlords.

17. D. E. Brown, in Zasloff and Goodman, p. 129, and the author's interviews with U.S. Department of State officials recently stationed in Cambodia, Washington, May 1972.

18. The Cambodian insurgent forces may have ordered their priorities differently from their Vietnamese mentors, who were primarily concerned with keeping the Ho Chi Minh Trail branches in Cambodia open and secure into the Mekong Delta region of South Vietnam.

19. Statement of the FUNK Information Bureau carried by Hanoi's VNA, 11 May 1970.

20. Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, esp. pp. 22, 45–46, 96, 122.

It appears that the Vietminh liberation experience was transferred to the Cambodian insurgency. Judging from reports of Western correspondents, the guerrilla units consisted of Khmer Rouge and Sihanoukist local forces, while regional and regular troops were primarily North Vietnamese and Viet Cong through 1972. One knowledgeable observer contends that the Vietnamese communist role in Cambodia had been reduced by late 1972 to that of controlling eastern Cambodia. Thus, by that time, the Cambodian communists had created both an effective enough army and governmental infrastructure to permit their Vietnamese allies to withdraw to a secondary position. The withdrawal also had the effect of reducing the ethnic animosities between Khmer and Vietnamese that had existed in mixed insurgent units.[21] The FUNK political program, emulating its Vietnamese counterpart, promised to reduce land rents and interest rates, but soft-pedaled outright land confiscation, probably because tenant farming has never been the problem in Cambodia that it was in Vietnam.[22] For example, in a data-rich study relating patterns of population density and tenancy to communist voting strength and insurgent activities in several Asian countries, Professor Donald Zagoria found that a high population density and a large rural population correlated significantly with communist political strength. None of these variables applied to Cambodia, however; and, indeed, *indigenous* communist strength up to the formation of the FUNK had not been great.[23]

The FUNK and RGNUC conform to what Douglas Pike identifies as the "united front from below" organization, in which a shadow government is created to control the population in "liberated" areas. All groups and individuals in such areas are urged to affiliate with the United Front and are assigned political and economic tasks in line with insurgent needs. Those who refuse to collaborate with the Front run the risk of being considered its enemies.[24] Thus, a combination of positive and negative incentives works to elicit popular support for the insurgency. Patriotic entreaties in Sihanouk's name have probably been more effective than communist ideological appeals. Nevertheless, in the last half of 1971, both communist and American sources estimated that only about 12,000 Cambodians were actually involved in Sihanouk's army, with perhaps another 18,000 engaged in logistical support for Vietnamese communist forces. One longtime observer of the

21. Cf. Richard Dudman, *Forty Days with the Enemy*, passim; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 March 1971; and Robert Norton, "Leave Them or Alienate Them," ibid., 22 May 1971, pp. 22–24. See also Samuel Adams, "The Identity of America's Foe in Cambodia."

22. For a sympathetic analysis of the FUNK political program, see Wilfred Burchett, *The Second Indochina War*, p. 77. See also the interview with FUNK spokesman Ieng Sary on the reformist aspects of the Front's operations in *L'Humanité* (Paris), 22 July 1972, p. 5.

23. Donald S. Zagoria, "The Ecology of Peasant Communism in India," p. 144–60.

24. Douglas Pike, *War, Peace, and the Viet Cong*, p. 110.

Indochina war explained the small size of the Sihanoukist army as a result of Hanoi's insistence that its Cambodian supporters grow rice and carry supplies rather than become a competitor.[25] Difficulties in obtaining sufficient supplies for the CPLAF from Vietnamese sources were acknowledged by Sihanouk in a late-1971 interview: "Our weakness, I admit, is transportation difficulties. Our Vietnamese friends have their own needs to take care of, and as a consequence a great deal of China's material aid has not yet been brought into Cambodia."[26] When, in late 1972, it appeared that the terms of a Vietnam cease-fire could result in a diminished flow of communist supplies into Cambodia, the Prince averred that the liberation army already held sufficient stocks of arms and ammunition for two more years of fighting. Furthermore, he projected, without U.S. air cover or Saigon's forces to protect Lon Nol's government, "it will be easy for us to quickly finish off this clique."[27]

Vietnamese communist and pro-Sihanouk successes in driving the small Cambodian army enclaves out of much of the countryside led to the Prince's boast to Chou En-lai at a Peking banquet only weeks after American and South Vietnamese troops had withdrawn from their sanctuary-clearing operation that the five eastern provinces of the country (Stung Treng, Kratie, Rattanakiri, Mondulkiri, and Preath Vihear) had been completely "liberated," while some ten additional provinces were partially so (Siem Reap, Oddar Meanchey, Battambang, Koh Kong, Pursat, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Speu, Kompong Chom, Kompong Thom, and Prey Veng).[28] In the ensuing two years, Lon Nol's army gradually withdrew from forward positions in much of the Cambodian countryside in the face of vastly superior Vietnamese communist forces. Particularly after the Vietnam People's Army (VPA) offensive into South Vietnam of March 30, 1972, which led Saigon to transfer most of its Cambodia-based troops back to South Vietnam, the Cambodian army's (FANK) defenses deteriorated badly. The Vietminh appeared able to sever at will Phnom Penh's supply and communications arteries along the country's five major highways and the Mekong River. Rocket and sapper attacks on Phnom Penh itself became virtually a monthly occurrence from the spring of 1972, as a warning to the government to keep its forces close to the capital. By August and September of that year, Phnom Penh's isolation actually led to a rice shortage crisis in the capital and some evidence of virtual anarchy among army elements, who raided merchants' rice supplies. By November 1972, FUNK propaganda media were openly predicting "a general attack to liberate the capi-

25. T. D. Allman, "Cambodia: The Long Way to Saigon," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 Sept. 1971, pp. 21–22.

26. Sihanouk, interview in *Tribune de Genève*, 10 Dec. 1971.

27. Sihanouk, interview in *Afrique-Asie*, reported by Agence France Presse, 8 Nov. 1972.

28. Sihanouk, banquet address to Chou En-lai, NCNA, 6 July 1970.

tal," though carefully omitting any specific date.[29] In March and April of 1973, insurgent attacks succeeded in isolating the capital from its suppliers several times, as CPLAF assaults occurred within ten miles of Phnom Penh's outskirts. Nevertheless Sihanouk demurred to the prospect of any attempt to take over the city itself, fearing that U.S. air power held it hostage and would "reduce the city to ashes."[30]

As mentioned above, there are two tasks facing a liberation movement. The first is to take territory, but the second is more important: to govern it in such a way that legitimacy accrues to the movement's political organization and objectives. For external audiences, who cannot directly experience the Front's governing capabilities but on whose favor international status depends, the Front must advertise and make plausible a semblance of governmental organization and voluntary support. The occurrence of early reports in May 1970 that Khieu Samphan, Hou Youn, and Hu Nim were leading the FUNK suggested that Sihanouk had acquiesced in the liberation movement's control by his former enemies, the Khmer Rouge, who had been heavily dependent for some years on Vietminh largesse. By September, governmental leadership in the "liberated areas" had expanded from the original three members to some ten "ministers," displaying a proliferating organizational apparatus which included Foreign Affairs, Popular Education and Youth, Public Health, Religious and Social Affairs, Economy and Finance, National Defence, Interior and Security, and Information and Propaganda.[31] A FUNK/RGNUC communiqué further stated that the whole government would be installed on Cambodian soil, "step by step." The political coloration of the government, the Prince admitted, was entirely Red Khmer.[32]

The style of governance appeared to be modeled after the Viet Cong experience against the Saigon government. According to Chinese sources, the FUNK/RGNUC abolished the tax structure of the Phnom Penh government in the "liberated areas," confiscated the property of "reactionary elements," and distributed it among the poor, while simultaneously mounting a production campaign to support the war effort. CPLAF forces "seized every opportunity to assist the people in production . . . [and] mobilized [them] to grow rice, cassava, and maize and to build houses."[33] In effect, then, the CPLAF were militia units whose tasks were more economic than military. The liberation government attempted to mobilize the population for economic tasks and socialize them into public affairs in contrast to the more passive role of the population in the past:

29. For typical examples of the FUNK's treatment of Phnom Penh's vulnerability, fallen morale, and possible "liberation," see the Cambodian Information Agency (AKI) in French to Southeast Asia, 25 Sept. and 6 Nov. 1972.
30. Sihanouk, interview after his return from Cambodia, AFP, 8 April 1973.
31. Communiqué of the FUNK/RGNUC Political Bureau, NCNA, 19 Sept. 1970.
32. AFP, 25 Sept. 1970.
33. NCNA, 19 and 25 Sept. 1970.

> Every citizen, even if only an ordinary citizen, has also positively participated in collective leadership in the liberated areas. All citizens have expressed their views in meetings and criticized shortcomings in collective management. This situation is . . . entirely contrary to the situation in the areas that have not yet been liberated, where martial law orders and special laws are ruling.[34]

By January 1971 Prince Sihanouk claimed control of over two-thirds of Cambodia for the FUNK.[35] Nevertheless, there were indications of difficulty in maintaining popular enthusiasm for a protracted war. The Front's own news agency (but apparently neither Peking nor Hanoi) carried an appeal by National Defense Minister Khieu Samphan urging the population in the "liberated areas" to "recognize the defeats and serious decline of the enemy as well as our victories" and "to understand perfectly the obstinate nature and dark designs of U.S. imperialism."[36] A subsequent press communiqué of the FUNK Central Committee Political Bureau warned of American, Saigon, and Phnom Penh attempts to divide the FUNK by convening "international conferences for a respite."[37] Once again, neither Peking nor Hanoi repeated these apprehensions.

Hints of a rift within the ranks of the Cambodian Front were exacerbated by reports that Sihanouk was purposefully being kept from establishing his presence on Cambodian soil for fear that he would oppose heavy-handed Vietminh control. In an interview with a Cairo newspaper, the Prince acknowledged that he had attempted to go to Cambodia but had been discouraged by the North Vietnamese:

> I have asked repeatedly to enter my country's territory, but unfortunately my request has not been granted for several reasons. My friend the DRV Premier objects to my request at the present time because my safety in crossing the Vietnamese borders into Cambodian territory cannot be guaranteed. . . . This, as my friends believe, would not be in the interest of any of the three countries—Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia—which today form a single unit of struggle against a common enemy—the United States and its agents.[38]

In order to ameliorate concern about the Front's solidarity and perhaps also to discuss real differences over policy control of the Front and its relations to Sihanouk's staff in Peking, in the late summer of 1971 the first of several well-publicized envoys from the "internal" branch of the (Cambodia-located) FUNK visited the "external" branch in Peking. According

34. Article by Sien An, RGNUC ambassador to the DRV, in *Nhan Dan,* 9 Nov. 1970.
35. Sihanouk, Sixteenth Message to the Khmer Nation, NCNA, 23 Jan. 1971.
36. AKI in French to East Asia, 6 March 1971.
37. AKI in French to East Asia, 21 March 1971.
38. *Al-Jumhuriyah,* 21 Nov. 1970.

to AKI, the visit attested to "the unity and close and harmonious coordination between the internal and external branches of FUNK and RGNUC" and shattered "the despicable slander . . . of the enemy aimed at weakening FUNK and breaking it up by political and diplomatic maneuvers."[39] In a Peking banquet address, the Prince subtly asserted his right to control political and administrative policy over the FUNK by denying foreign insinuations that he did not exercise such authority despite his title as head of state. The Prince insisted—probably rather as an expression of his hopes than as a description of reality—that "my nationalist, progressive, and Marxist compatriots who are carrying on resistance have decided of one accord to reject all ideological distinction or differences between them. They are and will be none other than members of the FUNK."[40]

At the same banquet, Ieng Sary, the envoy from the "interior" branch of the FUNK, asserted that the Front had liberated and occupied eight-tenths of Cambodia. With the country increasingly under Vietminh/Viet Cong and Khmer Rouge influence, it became ever more important to assert publicly that the RGNUC, in fact, was the real government of these areas—not only replacing Phnom Penh but also vis-à-vis the Vietnamese communists. In November 1971 a series of meetings began in several of the eastern Cambodian provinces during which ministers of the RGNUC were presented to the populace. The meetings were openly proclaimed to demonstrate that the "FUNK is not a fake political organization made up by the aliens, as the enemy claims," but rather a well-organized government with a "real political program on an entirely independent basis."[41] Nonetheless, subtle differences have persisted between the Front's "internal" and "external" branches. A resolution passed by the latter, for example, offered fulsome praise to China for its "immense aid," but did not mention the Vietnamese.[42]

On the other hand, an appeal by Defense Minister Khieu Samphan from the "interior" at approximately the same time dwelt on the united struggle with Vietnam and Laos.[43]

The Prince has been even more explicit in his reservations over the Khmer communists' ultimate goal for his country and mishaps which may even befall him personally:

> Of course, it may turn out that, after liberation, the communists will try to oust the others from power, as happened in Czechoslovakia with Masaryk. . . .
>
> It's too bad because I'd like Cambodia to be a kingdom, even with-

39. AKI in French to Southeast Asia, 23 Aug. 1971.
40. Sihanouk, banquet address, NCNA, 25 Aug. 1971.
41. Voice of the FUNK in Cambodian, 16 Dec. 1971.
42. NCNA, 4 Nov. 1971.
43. AKI in French to East Asia, 2 Nov. 1971.

> out me. . . . My communists are doing everything they can to quench that flame in the hearts of my supporters. I don't blame them. . . . They're communists, and they're doing their duty. I let them do it. Why? Because I'm tired, and I'm disgusted with people.[44]

The CPLAF's growing military successes in 1972–73 led Sihanouk to reassert his claim to leadership by visiting the Cambodian "liberated zone" via North Vietnam in March 1973 and announcing on his return that his leadership had been recognized as a result of contacts with resistance chiefs. Sihanouk admitted, however, that his position was "symbolical" and that the real control of the insurgency remained with such Khmer Rouge leaders as Khieu Samphan, Hou Youn, and Hu Nim—"eminent popular figures."[45]

The FUNK's orientation toward adversaries: Phnom Penh, Saigon, and Washington

While the FUNK's explanations for and justification of its own behavior constituted its most salient media theme, denigration of its prime adversaries and major obstacle to legitimacy (the Phnom Penh, Saigon, and American authorities) ran a close second. The Front considered itself engaged in a zero-sum competition with Phnom Penh and its backers; that is, any gains in either territorial control or popular confidence obtained by "the Lon Nol/Sirik Matak clique" meant an equal loss for the RGNUC. To obviate Phnom Penh gains, Prince Sihanouk adopted several verbal tactics. His favorite was to emphasize Phnom Penh's military and economic dependence on South Vietnamese and American largesse, playing upon popular apprehensions of Cambodia's becoming America's second "colony" after Vietnam.[46] The stress on Washington's utilization of Cambodia for its main purpose of prosecuting the war in Vietnam also supplied the FUNK with a justification for its own alliance: "As the American aggression against

44. Sihanouk, interview in *Tribune de Genève,* 10 Dec. 1971. The Prince also complained gloomily that the Khmer Rouge allowed him to retain the "Head of State" title only because he was still useful to them. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 5 Aug. 1972, p. 10.

45. Sihanouk, speech at a Hanoi reception on his return from Cambodia, VNA, 10 April 1973. Notable for a suggestion of persistent difference in attitude toward the Khmer Rouge, however, was a message from Sihanouk to his mother on April 9, broadcast by China's NCNA, which while claiming to confirm the Prince's leadership of the insurgency made no mention that it was either symbolic or subordinate to the Khmer Rouge. With perhaps unconscious irony, Sihanouk, back in Peking, admitted the tenuousness of his claim to leadership of the insurgency by noting that the FUNK interior leaders "never ceased to surround me with the most touching affection and to insist that I should return to the country next year and spend several weeks among them." *Peking Review* (16), 20 April 1973, p. 7.

46. This theme dominated Sihanouk's messages almost from the inception of his exile. See, for example, his condemnation of the American/South Vietnamese intervention in eastern Cambodia, in NCNA, 4 May 1970.

Cambodia is a component of the plan for the expansion of the war which the American imperialists are losing in South Vietnam and Laos, the FUNK coordinates its struggle with that of the fraternal peoples of Vietnam and Laos."[47]

Racial and nationalist appeals were exploited as Sihanouk complained that Lon Nol had permitted South Vietnamese forces virtually to annex large parts of eastern Cambodia, including Svay Rieng, Kompong Chom, Prey Veng, Kandal, and coastal areas from Hatien (South Vietnam) to the port of Sihanoukville. These forces were also accused of atrocities against civilians—a charge documented by liberal quotations from Western news dispatches.[48] Prince Sihanouk cleverly took advantage of subtle issues of status which seemed to show the Phnom Penh authorities as subordinate to Saigon. In one message he underscored that "Lon Nol and Sirik Matak, with their puppet Cheng Heng [chief of state] were singularly humiliated by 'President' Thieu of Saigon who received them at Neak Lueng, instead of going to see them at Phnom Penh, as if Cambodia belonged to Thieu and not to the Khmer people."[49]

The Prince repeatedly condemned the typical American/South Vietnamese use of artillery and air bombardment in Cambodia which destroyed both population and countryside. He pointedly contrasted the American and ARVN military destructive capacity with that of the "liberation forces," which consisted of "only 'ground troops' without heavy artillery and armored cars. We have no air force, no helicopters, no bombs, no napalm, no gas or toxic chemicals, all the 'things' possessed by our enemies for destroying our country."[50] Despite Sihanouk's disclaimers, however, Phnom Penh sources accused the Vietnamese communists of employing heavy artillery in their attacks on Cambodian villages, troop emplacements, and airfields.[51]

In urging defection from the Lon Nol side to the FUNK, Sihanouk interpreted the Nixon Doctrine of "Vietnamization" (or, in the case of Cambodia, "Khmerization") as an indication that the United States was unwilling to sustain its support of a protracted war in Cambodia. "The disastrous economic and financial situation in the United States," Sihanouk declared, "will no more allow Nixon to prolong his war and neocolonialism in Indochina and will . . . oblige him to drop the mercenary regimes of Thieu-Ky and of Lon Nol–Sirik Matak."[52] Meanwhile, the Prince argued, America has used Cambodia to fight its war in Vietnam on the cheap by

47. Political Program of the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), NCNA, 5 May 1970.
48. Sihanouk, Fifth Message to the Khmer Nation, NCNA, 24 May 1970.
49. Sihanouk, Special Message to Khmer military men serving Lon Nol, NCNA, 28 July 1970.
50. Sihanouk, Twelfth Message to the Khmer Nation, Part I, NCNA, 24 Dec. 1970.
51. Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 2 March 1972.
52. Sihanouk, Twentieth Message to the Khmer Nation, Part IV, NCNA, 25 March 1971.

"buying . . . Lonnolite Khmers to serve as 'cannon fodder' for U.S. imperialism." Thus, the United States has paid the Phnom Penh authorities the price of foreign aid in exchange for their sending "Khmer soldiers and officers to die in place of the Yankee soldiers and officers in the U.S. war of neo-colonialization of Indochina."[53]

As the economic situation within Cambodia deteriorated with the cutting of supply lines into the cities and with agricultural and other production slowdowns, the Prince focused on the combination of inflation and new war taxation in Phnom Penh. These hit urban bureaucratic and salaried middle classes particularly hard, the people who formed the backbone of Lon Nol's regime. Sihanouk reminded them that by the summer of 1971, although inflation had increased some 600 percent since his deposition, "the pay for functionaries and the income of other working people had not increased a single riel."[54]

The FUNK seemed forced to take the defensive in its propaganda toward Phnom Penh only once when, in the middle of the Cambodian army's Chenla II operation to clear Route 6, mass graves were discovered and survivors of the occupation told of Vietnamese communist brutality during its course. It is noteworthy that while Sihanouk chose to ignore these alleged depredations in his Thirty-First Message, part of which dealt with Chenla II, AKI specifically tried to refute the charges:

> These "mass graves" contained, in fact, the bodies of the puppet troops killed last year during Operation Chenla I. To convince foreign journalists brought to the places that these were the bodies of victims of the communists, the traitors brought in from Phnom Penh women clad in white with their heads shaven and made them cry by the graves of their husbands. However, the alert journalists were not in the least moved by this ghoulish sight. By questioning local villagers they discovered that the whole thing was a farce.[55]

When North Vietnamese regulars moved in to thwart the Chenla II operation in December 1971, Sihanouk noted gleefully that in the aftermath of this most severe Phnom Penh military setback of the war, the ceremonial head of state, Cheng Heng, "for the first time . . . proclaim[ed] in public his opposition to the 'dangerous' dictatorship of Lon Nol!" The Prince quoted one Cambodian officer's dejected comment: "We have lost in three days more ground than we had gained in three months," that is, since the beginning of Chenla II.[56] By late 1972, FUNK propagandists had linked the capital's physical isolation from the countryside with the numerous

53. Sihanouk, Twentieth Message, Part II, NCNA, 10 March 1971.
54. Sihanouk, Twenty-Third Message to the Khmer Nation, Part II, NCNA, 23 July, 1971.
55. AKI in French to East Asia, 12 Nov. 1971.
56. Sihanouk, Thirty-First Message to the Khmer Nation, Part III, NCNA, 20 Dec. 1971.

cabinet changes Lon Nol had initiated in hopes of finding a workable combination of leaders to break out of the Phnom Penh regime's military impasse.[57]

Aware of the fissures within the ranks of the Phnom Penh regime, the Prince attempted to exploit them at the end of 1971 in an interview with the Swiss press, by offering positions within his "government" to potential high-level defectors from Phnom Penh:

> Of course, we welcome them if they want to join us. For example, if one fine day Mr. Cheng Heng who—illegally, for that matter—is taking my place in Phnom Penh as chief of state, were to join us, we could make him minister or something of the sort in our government. But if Sirik Matak were to leave Phnom Penh and come to Peking, we could make him, for example, one of the deputy prime ministers in our government. Or even Lon Nol, if he comes; we can take them all, even though they are war criminals . . . if they come over to support the legitimate government. And so the way is still open for a political settlement, but on condition that the principle of our legitimacy is not violated.[58]

Thus, while pointing out the disadvantages of supporting Lon Nol in terms of devastation to the nation and its "colonization" by Saigon and Washington—as well as calling into question Phnom Penh's long-term viability, given general American disenchantment with a forward strategy in Indochina—Prince Sihanouk proffered the alternative of defection to his ranks with no questions asked for even the highest Phnom Penh officials. In effect, he declared that those who supported Lon Nol and Sirik Matak backed losing horses for both patriotic and pragmatic reasons. But out of personal magnanimity, the Prince was willing to let bygones be bygones and welcome prodigal sons once more to his paternal embrace. The solution, then, to Sihanouk appeared to be a liberal defection policy rather than compromise through negotiation. (More will be said on this issue in the last chapter below, dealing with possible solutions to the conflict.)

Relations with the Vietnamese communists

One of the most delicate and publicly surreptitious relationships developed by the FUNK has been its ties to and coordination with Vietnamese communist forces, which, according to virtually all outside observers, did

57. AKI in French to Southeast Asia, 6 Nov. 1972.

58. Sihanouk, interview in the *Tribune de Genève,* 10 Dec. 1971. One year later, however, Sihanouk changed his position when the Khmer Republic attempted to contact elements of the Khmer Rouge in hopes of establishing a coalition government. See the RGNUC statement carried by NCNA, 24 Oct. 1972, and Sihanouk's 50th birthday statement, released by NCNA, 30 Oct. 1972.

the bulk of the fighting through late 1972 in the name of Sihanouk's "liberation movement." Richard Dudman, of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* who was captured in the early days of the Saigon-American intervention in eastern Cambodia in the spring of 1970, reported in a very sympathetic book on his stay with the anti-Phnom Penh guerrillas that North Vietnamese cadres controlled the FUNK units he observed. According to Dudman, the Vietnamese communists appeared to get along quite well with Cambodian villagers—although it should be recalled that Vietminh cadres had been operating in this part of Cambodia at least since 1968 and probably had developed considerable rapport in the ensuing period. The existence of an elaborate network of sympathizers and "safe houses" reinforces this belief in a well-planned Vietminh "sphere of influence" in eastern Cambodia. Dudman reported that the behavior of the guerrillas seemed exemplary. They paid for supplies, they did all their own cooking, and sometimes they even lived under village houses so as not to disturb the occupants.[59] There is also some evidence to suggest that at least in the early period of the war Vietminh and Viet Cong forces did not purposely draw heavy government fire onto Cambodian villages—a tactic used to alienate the population from the central authorities in South Vietnam. For example, during the first and more successful part of Phnom Penh's Chenla II operation in the summer of 1971, townspeople in villages from which Vietminh forces had withdrawn told reporters that during the whole course of the communist occupation of their district, the cadres stayed away from the town, arriving only once each day to help officials they had installed to collect taxes.[60] At least in part out of deference to its Khmer Rouge and Sihanoukist allies, then, the Vietnamese did not seem to engage in mutual-terror warfare of the kind that characterized Vietnam after 1965.[61]

The first indication that a formal united front between Sihanouk and the Vietnamese communists would be established came in a joint message from the PRGSV president, Huynh Tan Phat, and NLF leader Nguyen Huu Tho, in which "U.S. imperialism" was cited as the common source of the two peoples' difficulties; "mutual understanding and assistance" between Cambodians and Vietnamese were portended to "bring to victory the cause of the fraternal and eternal friendship between Vietnamese and Khmer."[62]

When the Peking-sponsored summit conference among the Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian "liberation movements" concluded at the end of April 1970 (to be discussed in greater detail in Chapter V), Prince

59. Richard Dudman, *Forty Days with the Enemy,* pp. 57, 61, 65.
60. AP dispatch, 29 Aug. 1971.
61. Some contradictory evidence is presented in Chapter V below.
62. NFL and PRGSV, joint message to Prince Sihanouk, Liberation Press Agency, 26 March 1970.

Sihanouk chose to stress those aspects of the final communiqué which mentioned each country's *independent* determination of its future political organization and process.[63] Earlier, just before the conference had convened, he had even intimated that its purpose would be to demonstrate "that the Vietnamese socialists—both in the south and in the north—and the Laotian socialists agree to formally recognize Cambodia's territorial integrity within its present frontiers."[64] A statement to this effect may have enhanced the Prince's credibility as chief spokesman for Cambodia's political interests. It would also have provided a potential lever against permanent Vietnamese communist occupation of the eastern Cambodian provinces. However, no mention was made of Cambodia's territorial integrity in the final communiqué. And that particular issue disappeared from Sihanouk's subsequent messages.

The FUNK political program, released within a week of the summit meeting, justified a joint struggle among Cambodians and Vietnamese along with Laotian communists to face an American aggressor who had already widened the war to encompass the whole peninsula. Perhaps the most interesting part of the document was its foreign-policy section, in which it was stated that the Front "will not participate in any military alliance, nor does it allow any foreign country to set up military bases or station troops and military personnel on the territory of Cambodia for the purpose of aggression against other countries. The FUNK does not accept the protection of any country or military alliance."[65] Of course, the purpose of this statement was to abrogate Cambodia's status as a SEATO protocol state while simultaneously justifying cooperation with the Vietnamese communists "to make Indochina genuinely a zone of independence, peace, and progress." The FUNK political program, then, formalized a change in the country's foreign policy under its aegis from nonalignment to de facto membership in the Vietnamese communist coalition against the United States and its Indochinese allies (or clients).

Prince Sihanouk attempted to provide this new international stance with some selected historical defense by noting that in the past under his leadership, Cambodia had "lent support," within the "framework of Indochinese solidarity, to the just struggles of peoples beset by American imperialist aggression." Nevertheless, he emphasized, there would be no unified command. The summit conference agreed to

> thoroughly respect the principle that the liberation of each country must be undertaken entirely by the people and government of that country. Hence, insofar as Cambodia is concerned, it is the defence

63. Sihanouk, press statement, NCNA, 30 April 1970.
64. Sihanouk, First Message to the Khmer Nation, Radio Peking in Cambodian, 21 April 1970.
65. Political Program of the FUNK, NCNA, 5 May 1970.

minister, Khieu Samphan, it is the FUNK Government which direct operations now going on in Cambodia. If we need help from our Vietnamese or Lao brothers, that aid will be integrated into the Cambodian command in Cambodia.[66]

Subsequent high-level talks between the DRV and RGNUC in Hanoi elicited a formal North Vietnamese reiteration "to respect the territorial integrity of Cambodia within her existing borders" and a promise that "the liberation and defense of each country is the affair of its people." Mutual assistance would be tendered "according to the desire of the party concerned," but toward the goal of "winning *total* victory over the U.S. aggressors" (emphasis added).[67] In other words, while North Vietnamese officials offered lip service to Cambodian independence, they still insisted that the fight against the United States was an Indochina-wide struggle which implicitly subordinated separate national objectives to the essentially Vietnamese communist goal of driving American forces out of the peninsula.

Prince Sihanouk appeared to accept this North Vietnamese interpretation of the alliance when he pointed out to Kim Il Song at a banquet address in P'yongyang that "the Cambodian problem . . . cannot be separated [from] the Vietnam and Laos problems, because none of our countries can enjoy durable security and peace as long as the American imperialists do not accept . . . complete withdrawal from the whole of Indochina."[68] In an interview with Agence France-Presse, the Prince readily admitted the presence of Vietminh troops on Cambodian territory and attributed it to the fact that by invading Cambodia, "the Americans erased the line of demarcation and have turned the Vietnam war into an Indochinese war. Henceforth, Indochina must be considered as a single battlefield, and the Indochinese will remain united until final victory."[69] The Prince hoped, nonetheless, that Cambodian guerrillas would be able to assume the brunt of the fighting in his country once they were trained by the Vietnamese, though he acknowledged they were totally dependent on North Vietnam for supplies and instructors. Many of these supplies were originally destined for Phnom Penh and hijacked by Vietnamese communists along Route 4 from the deepwater port of Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) 120 miles to the south or along Route 5, leading to rice-rich Battambang province, 150 miles to the northwest.[70]

FUNK officials became increasingly sensitive to the dominant role of the

66. Sihanouk, interview in *Afrique-Asie* (Paris), 25 May 1970.
67. DRV/RGNUC joint statement, VNA, 8 June 1970.
68. KCNA, 16 June 1970.
69. AFP, 3 July 1970.
70. *New York Times,* 1 Nov. 1970. After the January 1973 agreement on Vietnam, the Prince claimed that even more of the CPLAF's supplies and weapons came from matériel captured from Phnom Penh's forces and supply convoys. See the Sihanouk speech carried by VNA, 10 April 1973.

Vietnamese communists in the Cambodian war through 1971 and 1972 as the bulk of the countryside fell to the insurgents' control. Kate Webb, the correspondent of United Press International who was captured by North Vietnamese in Cambodia in April 1970, reported that her captors looked upon the CPLAF as a rather weak military organization and admitted that their own forces were stationed in the toughest battle spots and fought in total separation from their Cambodian allies.[71] In a letter to the *Far Eastern Economic Review,* Sihanouk, while admitting the presence of Vietnamese communist forces in Cambodia, argued nonetheless (and perhaps with the North Vietnamese themselves as a target) that "the FUNK troops today are sufficiently well-equipped and armed to assume by themselves the responsibility of the progressive liberation of Cambodia."[72] And, indeed, by the spring of 1973, most of the fighting around Phnom Penh appeared to be composed of Cambodian insurgents under some Vietnamese communist leadership.

Ieng Sary, however, the spokesman of the Khmer Rouge component of the FUNK inside Cambodia, who had long conversations with Sihanouk and Penn Nouth in Peking during the summer and fall of 1971, seemed less anxious to loosen the Front's bonds to North Vietnam. Perhaps articulating the views of Cambodian communists who foresaw their future best protected if Indochina became Vietminh-dominated, Ieng Sary declared: "This solidarity between our two peoples is a combat solidarity forged in the blazing flames of the revolutionary war for the liberation of our two countries. This solidarity is not born either by chance or by circumstances. . . . It is permanent because our two peoples, who are advancing toward the complete liberation of their respective countries, need it for . . . reconstruction."[73]

Penn Nouth, on the other hand, as spokesman for the Sihanoukist branch of the Front, has subtly expressed the desire of the Prince's faction to lessen its dependence on Hanoi. In a press conference celebrating the first anniversary of the FUNK, Penn Nouth referred to the areas of Cambodia which had been won by the Front and declared: "This vast and rich liberated zone constitutes a strategic base with inexhaustible economic and financial resources capable of feeding our people and the CPLAF in the present struggle as well as in a protracted struggle."[74] This statement, combined with the absence of any reference to Hanoi's role in Cambodia, implied real concern over the future independence of the Cambodian "liberation movement" be-

71. UPI dispatch by Kate Webb in the *Lexington* (Kentucky) *Herald,* 13 May 1971. U.S. Department of State officials recently stationed in Cambodia confirmed this analysis during interviews in Washington. May 1972.

72. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 13 Nov. 1971, p. 31.

73. Ieng Sary, speech in Hanoi, VNA, 17 Nov. 1971.

74. Penn Nouth, press conference on the first anniversary of the FUNK, NCNA, 24 March 1971.

cause of it total reliance on Vietnamese communist supplies and training.

There is also evidence to show that North Vietnam utilized its control of supplies into Cambodia to partially determine the size and activities of the FUNK and hence ensure its subordination to Vietnamese communist objectives. Sihanouk admitted to Western correspondents that "our Vietnamese friends have their own needs to take care of, and as a consequence a great deal of China's material aid has not yet been brought into Cambodia."[75] Front forces even resorted to scavenging the weapons of Cambodian military casualties to replenish FUNK arsenals: "Formerly we were in great need of weapons and military matériel. But since we have been winning over the enemy on all fronts and recently on the Chenla II front and at Damber, we have acquired a sufficient armament composed of guns and munitions of all kinds seized from the panic-stricken retreating enemy troops."[76]

The public record suggested, then, that the Cambodian component of the insurgency was breaking into segments—one, essentially an extension of Vietnamese communist interests, composed of Khmer Rouge cadres who had long had a relationship with the Vietminh, and the other gathered around Prince Sihanouk and his entourage in Peking. The latter displayed increasing concern over its longterm dependence on North Vietnam. If this assessment is accurate, then one would expect to detect signs of growing friction between the Sihanoukists—particularly in Peking—and the operative members of the FUNK/RGNUC in Cambodia. And, indeed, in the last quarter of 1972, as a Vietnam cease-fire appeared imminent, Sihanouk displayed considerable apprehension over possible Khmer Rouge/Khmer Republic negotiations which would leave him high and dry in Peking (see note 58, above).

Sihanouk's relations with Peking

Sihanouk's decision to locate his government-in-exile in Peking came about as other options disappeared. In his initial statement to the press soon after his arrival, the Prince explained that he would shift alternately from Peking to Moscow.[77] That plan was dropped, however, probably because such an alternation between two hostile capitals was unacceptable to both of them and also because the Prince became increasingly disenchanted with Moscow's skepticism about his chances of returning to power. Despite periodic journeys by Sihanouk's functionaries to Moscow, discussions with Soviet leaders came to naught; and no diplomatic recognition occurred. Moscow appeared to write off the Sihanouk exile movement as a captive of

75. Sihanouk, interview in the *Tribune de Genève*, 10 Dec. 1971.
76. Voice of the FUNK, 25 Dec. 1971.
77. AFP, 22 March 1970.

Peking and even continued a small-scale military assistance program for the Lon Nol government, perhaps as a price to both North Vietnam and Sihanouk for their new, even closer relationship to Peking. Sihanouk's subsequent bitterness toward the Soviet Union and his complete adoption of the Chinese line on the Indochina war was well summarized in his interview of December 10, 1971, with the *Tribune de Genève:*

> I think the Russians feel like whites, and they don't want the yellow people to get too strong. It would be hard for the USSR not to help North Vietnam, which is in the socialist camp. But I've seen what the Russians are giving Hanoi. The planes, the rockets, the radar—none of it is modern equipment. The Russians haven't given Hanoi a quarter of what they have given Egypt. . . . it's because the Russians don't want Hanoi to win. They give the Vietnamese just enough so they won't lose the war, but not enough to win it. . . . The Russians have a complex about the yellow peril, and by handicapping the Indochinese, they are really aiming at China.

The Prince also hoped to use his Chinese backers to lessen his liberation movement's dependence on Hanoi, just as he had relied throughout his political career on Peking's interest in maintaining a series of independent states in Indochina rather than a Vietnamese-controlled neighboring region. In the early period of his exile, Peking broadcast appeals from such Sihanouk advisors as Penn Nouth, urging Lon Nol and Sirik Matak "to relinquish state and military power and to invite the Prince father to return to steer the state, to restore the balance of force beween the free world and the communist camp."[78] When it became apparent that reconciliation between the new Phnom Penh government and Sihanouk was out of the question, the latter turned to negotiating the specific character of China's support.

In an interview with *Afrique-Asie* (Paris) published on May 25, 1970, the Prince first revealed that China had agreed to an interest-free loan for his front's operational expenses as well as the free provision of arms. According to the Prince, "Chairman Mao . . . told me: 'We shall lend you money for the business of your state. But as for arms, we are not in the habit of selling them; we are not traffickers in arms. We cannot sell you weapons, we can only give them to you.' " The arms would be transported from China through North Vietnam to the Cambodian insurgents. This agreement was formalized in Peking two months later.[79]

In the course of his numerous interviews and messages to the Cambodian people, the Prince managed to convey the belief that China, at least, would prefer the maintenance of Cambodia's nonalignment. The Prince stated on

78. Penn Nouth, message, Radio Peking, in Cambodian, 1 April 1970.
79. NCNA, 17 Aug. 1970.

several occasions that Chinese officials told him: "We would be gaining nothing if we made you a satellite; but if we respect your independence, it will be a reassuring example for the small countries of the third world."[80] Of course, such publicity, purveyed gratuitously by the Prince, of both Chinese and Vietminh good intentions can also be explained as a tactic on the part of a basically weak bargainer to commit publicly his much stronger partners to a course of benevolence in which they themselves have little interest. Thus, when the Prince declares to Western correspondents that both Vietminh and Chinese have assured him "that their respect of Cambodia's independence would be a reassuring example for other small countries in the world," one is inclined to see more Sihanouk than Hanoi and Peking in such remarks.[81] The Prince has for some time had an image of the kind of policy larger powers should follow toward their smaller and more vulnerable neighbors. By projecting it onto both China and Vietnam, he may hope to commit them publicly to a course of action consistent with the image. Nevertheless, even assuming that the statements attributed to the Chinese and North Vietnamese represent their real positions, it should be noted that the emphasis is on the maintenance of Cambodia's "independence" rather than its nonalignment. Cambodia could be "independent" under a Vietminh-oriented Khmer Rouge regime which could take it "independently" into a North-Vietnamese-dominated Indochina federation. In the Casella interview for the *Bangkok World,* the Prince concluded—almost as an afterthought—"Just imagine that Vietnam would want to colonize Cambodia. Well, China will not permit it." The Prince remained in the unenviable position of trying to ensure that just such a negative development did not take place, with few resources at his disposal to obstruct it.

The announcement in July 1971 of President Nixon's coming visit to Peking disturbed Cambodian Front leaders as much as their North Vietnamese allies. In a speech from P'yongyang (rather than Peking) the Prince reiterated that "the problem of Indochina can be settled only by the Indochinese peoples themselves" and insisted that Chou En-lai had "assured me that China did not break her word and that the forthcoming visit of Nixon to Peking would in no way bring a change in the attitude of the CPR, which will remain in full solidarity with the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia."[82]

Nevertheless, unidentified external pressures on Cambodian Front leaders indicated that influence was being exerted by outside powers to bring about some kind of negotiated settlement short of total Front victory. The Khmer Rouge envoy, Ieng Sary, in a speech in Peking probably alluded to the Soviet Union, though he did not name it, which had earlier that month held

80. Sihanouk, interview in *L'Espresso* (Rome), 27 Dec. 1970.
81. Alessandro Casella, interview in the *Bangkok World,* 7 Feb. 1971.
82. Sihanouk, Twenty-Fourth Message to the Khmer Nation, KCNA, 31 July 1971.

out the prospect of some assistance to the FUNK for the first time.[83] The Cambodian envoy "condemned the design of certain big powers to control his country under the pretext of extending aid. . . . They want us to negotiate with the enemy . . . and give up our struggle; we will resolutely refuse such aid."[84] Subsequently, Sihanouk rejected a new Geneva conference which might lead to a partitioning of the country.[85] Although Peking provided media outlets for Cambodian Front rejections of negotiations on the war, Chinese leaders themselves did not initiate any commentary on the issue in 1971.

The most severe indictment of outside intrigues (once more, probably Soviet) came in an allegation by "Prime Minister" Penn Nouth that "U.S. imperialism and its big-power collaborators are resorting to various forms of subversion, trying to split our national united front from the inside, . . . to despatch enemy agents and plant them in our national united front both in our country and abroad . . . to create contradictions and confusion."[86] The charges portended at least two possible developments. One could be policy differences within the Front in which the Khmer Rouge leadership accused its internal rivals of consorting with the enemy. Thus, honest differences over future courses of action may be suppressed through the fear of allegations of treason. A second development could be an actual infiltration of either Lon Nol agents or pro-Soviet Cambodians into the Front in the guise of genuine defectors from Phnom Penh. This second explanation seems less likely, however, because of the absence of any strong pro-Soviet orientation in the Cambodian Left and the improbability that Lon Nol agents could infiltrate either the "liberated areas" or the FUNK in sufficient numbers to challenge Khmer Rouge leadership. (The relation between a split in the FUNK and a possible negotiated settlement in the war will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.)

It is instructive to review separately in tabular form (Table 4.2) the major themes of Sihanouk's special messages to the Khmer nation to see if the issues he has deemed salient correspond to the rank-ordering of Table 4.1 for all of the media sources open to RGNUC spokesmen. A comparison could illustrate differences between Sihanouk's views—of the war, of his allies, of his enemies—and the views of Vietminh and RGNUC spokesmen. Derivatively, such information could convey potential sources of disagreement between Sihanouk's entourage in Peking and the Cambodia-located members of the Front.

83. Radio Moscow in Cambodian, 12 Sept. 1971.
84. NCNA, 22 Sept. 1971.
85. Sihanouk, Twenty-Seventh Message to the Khmer Nation, NCNA, 24 Sept. 1971, and the resolution of the RGNUC meeting of heads of diplomatic and political missions, NCNA, 4 Nov. 1971.
86. Penn Nouth, banquet address in Kansu, NCNA, 18 Sept. 1971.

Table 4.2. *Topical breakdown of Sihanouk's messages to the Khmer Nation (unit of analysis is mention in the total message)*

Date	*Critique of Phnom Penh and its Saigon and Washington backers*	*DRV support*	*Peking support*	*RGNUC operations*
Apr 1970–Dec 1971				
Apr 21, 1970	x			x
May 24, 1970	x			
June 3, 1970	x			
June 30, 1970	x			x
July 28, 1970	x	x	x	x
Sep 15, 1970				x
Oct 5, 1970	x			
Oct 12, 1970	x			x
Dec 15, 1970	x			
Dec 24, 1970	x			x
Dec 29, 1970	x			
Jan 3, 1971	x			
Jan 10, 1971	x			x
Jan 16, 1971				x
Jan 23, 1971	x			x
Feb 3, 1971	x			x
Mar 10, 1971	x			
Mar 25, 1971	x			x
June 9, 1971	x			
June 18, 1971	x			x
July 13, 1971	x			
July 23, 1971	x			
July 31, 1971	x		x	x
Aug 6, 1971	x			
Aug 26, 1971	x			x
Nov 25, 1971	x			
Dec 20, 1971	x			
Dec 31, 1971	x			
Subtotal	26	1	2	14
Jan–Oct 1972[a]				
Jan 23, 1972	x			
Apr 5, 1972	x			
Sep 7, 1972	x			x
Sep 25, 1972	x	x		
Oct 10, 1972	x			x
Subtotal, 1972	5	1	0	2
Total Apr 1970–Oct 1972	31	2	2	16

[a] Pervading Sihanouk's 1972 messages is the belief that the Phnom Penh government had become totally discredited both at home and abroad and that its demise was approaching rapidly. The intensity of this theme peaked in Sihanouk's message of September 7 hailing the decision of the nonaligned conference in Guyana to seat the RGNUC delegation instead of the Khmer Republic's.

The frequency distribution in Table 4.2 demonstrates that Sihanouk's overwhelming concern in his messages to the Khmer nation has been to discredit the Phnom Penh regime. In only 2 of 33 messages was this topic not treated. By comparing Table 4.2 with Table 4.1 and subtracting the Sihanouk messages from the total attention given to the Lon Nol government and its allies, the number drops from 55 to 27. In short, it has been Sihanouk's concern with his Phnom Penh adversaries which has given that theme much of its prominence in the total RGNUC/DRV/CPR propaganda output. In contrast, the Prince has paid virtually no attention to his North Vietnamese and Chinese allies, despite the fact—as Table 4.1 shows—that both external supporters have been the subject of a fair amount of commentary from other Front sources. Sihanouk's own FUNK/RGNUC, while an object of some attention in his messages, was mentioned only half as frequently as the Phnom Penh regime.

One explanation for this skewed distribution might be a conscious decision on the FUNK's part to divide the propaganda burden among several sources and utilize the Prince as the major vehicle for discrediting Lon Nol. However, multiple source attacks on Phnom Penh and its backers presumably would have an even greater impact on Cambodian target audiences. Nor does this explanation account for Sihanouk's lack of interest in either Hanoi's or Peking's contribution to the Front's war effort.

A more plausible explanation of the Prince's verbal behavior takes into account his desire to remain independent (or obtain independence) from Peking and Hanoi and somehow return on his own as Cambodian head of state. By underplaying North Vietnam's role in Cambodia, the Prince may have tacitly acknowledged the unpopularity of the North Vietnamese occupation of much of the countryside and tried to dissociate himself from it. A qualitative examination of Sihanouk's references to the RGNUC indicates that in every case but two the Front is described as the only viable alternative to an American and/or Saigon-controlled Phnom Penh. Sihanouk virtually never touched on the positive appeals of the Front in and of itself, a theme frequently mentioned by the Voice of the FUNK, AKI, and Radio Hanoi. In sum, the Prince seemed much less concerned about the positive attributes of the FUNK than he was with the negative qualities of those who overthrew him and swept Cambodia into the Indochina conflagration. The topical breakdown of the Prince's messages to the Khmer nation suggests, then, his skepticism—if not outright distrust—of his prime backers and a less than fully enthusiastic endorsement of the FUNK, despite the fact that he remained its nominal leader.

For a closer look at Prince Sihanouk's Messages to the Khmer Nation in terms of evaluative assertion analysis, see Annex II, below.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the perceptions of Prince Sihanouk and FUNK officials toward allies and adversaries. It has also tried to assess their beliefs about the efficacy of the "liberation movement." Among the tentative conclusions reached was evidence of the Prince's own ambivalence about his Vietminh and Khmer Rouge allies, upon whose military operations he has depended to win back Cambodia from Lon Nol, but whose ultimate intentions for the future of his country he has distrusted. In attempts to balance this reliance on the Vietnamese communists, the Prince has insisted —probably with only partial success—that the FUNK draw its membership from all elements of Cambodian society and that his entourage in Peking be consulted on all major policy decisions.

FUNK leaders have admitted holding different priorities for the war from their Vietnamese allies, the latter being primarily concerned with maintaining supply lines through arteries of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in eastern Cambodia to the Mekong Delta area of South Vietnam, postponing any ultimate overthrow of Phnom Penh with its attendant administrative control problems. The Vietminh have also appeared to limit the amount of war matériel sent into Cambodia for their own operations.

The FUNK's political program would formalize a change in Cambodian foreign policy from nonalignment to de facto membership in a North-Vietnamese-directed Indochina coalition against the United States and its clients. North Vietnam has apparently insisted that the coalition's primary goal must be the *total* expulsion of U.S. forces from Indochina and that all other national goals must be subordinated to that objective.

Chapter V. How North Vietnam perceived Cambodia's role in the Indochina war

An analysis of Vietnamese communist perceptions of the Cambodian segment of the Indochina war is somewhat more complex than a similar exercise with Sihanouk and the RGNUC. As the de facto director of the Indochina "liberation movement," Hanoi must orchestrate battlefield tactics in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam to serve its overall strategy. For purposes of this study, Cambodia's role within that strategy must be discovered, and the degree of congruity between the Vietnamese communists' conception of that role and the conceptions of their Cambodian and Chinese allies (as well as their Cambodian, Vietnamese, and American adversaries) must be assessed. Hanoi's problem is one of subordinating the interests of its Cambodian ally in achieving the overthrow of the Lon Nol regime to its own primary goal of replacing the Saigon government—perhaps as a first step toward the creation of an Indochina confederation.

North Vietnam's interest in Cambodia and an Indochina confederation goes back to the First Indochina War. In April 1950 the Vietminh established a Central Committee for the Liberation of the Khmer People. It was followed some seventeen months later by the creation of a Cambodian Revolutionary Party. At approximately the same time, a manifesto and program of the newly formed Vietnam Workers Party expressed the hope that there would come about "an independent, free, strong, and prosperous federation of the states of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia." Prior to the April 1954 Geneva Conference, three Vietminh battalions invaded Cambodia over the northeastern frontier. Hanoi subsequently requested recognition of and representation for a Khmer Resistance Government at Geneva. In mid-June 1954, however, Anthony Eden and Chou En-lai agreed that North Vietnam must be persuaded to withdraw its forces from Cambodia and Laos in exchange for a proviso that the United States would establish no bases there. Furthermore, it was Chou's understanding that as neutral states, neither Cambodia nor Laos was to become any part of an American defense arrangement. The Cambodian delegate to Geneva, however, insisted that his country reserved the right to call for outside assistance should the Vietminh threat recur—a reservation which was utilized by the United States to place Cambodia in the status of a protocol state within SEATO in 1955.[1]

1. For a discussion of the diplomacy and politics of this period as they affected the new Cambodian state, see Michael Leifer, *Cambodia: The Search for Security*, pp. 42, 50–55. See also Brian Shaw, "China and North Vietnam: Two Revolutionary Paths: II," p. 9.

North Vietnam only very gradually recovered direct influence in Cambodia after its acquiescence in China's persuasion at Geneva. By April 1968, however, once again in the Cambodian northeast, Vietnamese communist agents established a "national alliance" designed to attract noncommunist dissidents who had grievances against heavy-handed and corrupt local administrators. Although ostensibly indigenous to the region, the ties of the "alliance" with North Vietnam were transparent; its announcements were carried exclusively by communist media and its information office in Paris was in the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front headquarters.[2]

From North Vietnam's viewpoint, the initial purpose of the "alliance" was probably not to serve as a base to overthrow what was still viewed as a basically sympathetic Cambodian government (despite right-wing influence since 1967), but rather to ensure that tributary branches of the Ho Chi Minh Trail which traversed northeastern Cambodia would be secure. When, however, Sihanouk's government, which had provided sanctuary for beleaguered North Vietnamese troops as well as supply routes and food, was replaced by a leadership that cut off those supplies and pledged itself to eliminate the sanctuary, North Vietnam had to shift priorities to (1) securing complete control of eastern Cambodia and (2) bringing down the Lon Nol regime.

Within one month after Sihanouk's overthrow, North Vietnamese forces had established control over the entire eastern border from mountainous Rattanakiri province in the north to the Gulf of Siam in the south, even capturing the Parrot's Beak promontory which juts deep into South Vietnam in the southeast. French plantation owners in Kompong Chom were encouraged to continue their rubber production, some of whose revenues were paid as protection. The capture of Attopeu in southern Laos by May 1970 secured river supply routes from North Vietnam into eastern Cambodia, thus assuring the Vietnamese communists and their Cambodian supporters of a permanent base in the northern Cambodian provinces east of the Mekong River.[3]

By early 1971, U.S. government sources estimated, some 50,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong regular forces were in Cambodia—a figure which apparently has not substantially changed as time has gone by.[4] Captured or defecting Vietnamese communists have estimated the total number of their own plus Cambodian communist forces to be a maximum of 150,000. Khmer Rouge forces, according to these sources, fight separately

2. Douglas Pike, *War, Peace, and the Viet Cong*, pp. 18–32.

3. See the *New York Times* accounts, 26 April and 7 June 1970. See also Wilfred G. Burchett, *The Second Indochina War: Cambodia and Laos*, p. 82.

4. Richard M. Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A Report to the Congress* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Feb. 1971), p. 82; *Washington Post*, 8 May 1972.

Table 5.1. *Frequency rank-ordering of topics carried by Vietnamese Communist media related to the Cambodian war, April 1970 to October 1972, as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Asia and Pacific Daily Reports*

Theme issue	*Number*[a]	*Rank*
1. Attitude toward Phnom Penh, the United States, and South Vietnam	28	1
2. Attitude Toward Sihanouk and the RGNUC[b]	20	2
3. Attitude Toward Vietnamese communist activities (self image)[b]	16	3

[a] The unit of analysis is the whole broadcast or newspaper transcript. Only those transcripts were selected which were primarily concerned with the Cambodian war.

[b] In effect, categories 2 and 3 were so close in number of transcripts that they could be considered tied.

from the Vietnamese communists, although the latter have some pro-Sihanouk Cambodians fighting along with their own forces.[5] If the North Vietnamese model their relationship to their Cambodian sympathizers on their experience in Laos, then they have probably been fairly unobtrusive in local affairs. According to a careful study of the VPA-Laotian relationship, the North Vietnamese do not extend their advisory posts below the province level. The adviser organization parallels the Pathet Lao hierarchy and provides assistance in communications and education, while apparently avoiding extensive interference in local economic affairs. The North Vietnamese appeared to be respected for both competence and tact and may well have been recruited specifically on the basis of their "diplomatic" and organizational skills. Their military-training missions have stressed political indoctrination of an unsophisticated nationalist variety in which the United States is depicted as an imperialist power bent on conquering the country.[6] The major differences between the Laotian and Cambodian contexts include the relative absence of a strong domestic communist movement in Cambodia plus reports that the indigenous Khmer Rouges do not appear to get along very well with their North Vietnamese allies, whom they may view as interlopers.

A topical breakdown of Vietnamese communist media output is presented in Table 5.1. There are several interesting features of the topical distribution in the table as compared with the Phnom Penh and RGNUC media output of Chapters III and IV. One is first struck by the smaller num-

5. R. P. W. Norton, "When the Truth Hurts," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 Feb. 1971, pp. 22–23; and the author's interviews with U.S. Department of State officials recently stationed in Cambodia, May 1972.

6. Paul Langer and Joseph Zasloff, *North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao*, pp. 108–10, 118–19.

ber of theme issues available from Vietnamese communist sources and the virtual absence of references to China's support for the Indochinese "liberation movement." A second feature is the predominance of the first theme—the activities of the Phnom Penh regime and its backers—more than 43 percent of Hanoi's total attention being devoted to it. That is, North Vietnam's adversaries were viewed as significantly more salient than their Cambodian ally. This interpretation of the frequency distribution is reinforced by noting that the last two themes were given substantially equal attention. To elaborate, in a situation in which North Vietnam and the Viet Cong deliberately understated their involvement in the Cambodian war, their media devoted, nonetheless, almost the same attention to their own orientations toward the conflict as to the Sihanoukist forces which received the credit for prosecuting the war. In sum, the frequency distribution suggests that while the Cambodian segment of the Indochina war was important to the Vietminh, its importance may have been more a function of the ability of American, South Vietnamese, and Phnom Penh forces to harass North Vietnamese supply operations into South Vietnam than any intrinsic value attached to a communist Cambodia. These speculations can be assessed only through a qualitative analysis of the media output, to which we now turn.

Attitudes of North Vietnam toward Phnom Penh, the United States, and the Republic of Vietnam

North Vietnam's initial reaction to the sacking of the Vietnamese communist embassies in Phnom Penh on March 11, 1970, was to underplay their significance as a bellwether of political reorientation in Cambodia and attribute the destruction instead to "saboteurs" who "engineered acts detrimental to friendship between the Vietnamese and Cambodian governments and peoples." *Nhan Dan,* in a Commentator article on March 14, indicated that Hanoi was fully prepared to maintain good relations with Sihanouk's government once he returned to Phnom Penh. When it became apparent, however, that the Prince was not returning to Cambodia and that the new Phnom Penh regime had charged North Vietnam with imperialistic designs on its country, DRV media sprang to the defense of their forces' behavior, denied "the slanders of the pro-U.S. ultrarightist clique in Cambodia against the Vietnamese people," and countercharged that the overthrow of Sihanouk was "aimed at preparing for the use of Cambodia by the Americans to oppose the Vietnamese people's patriotic struggle."[7]

The subsequent Chinese-sponsored Indochinese Peoples' Conference,

7. *Nhan Dan* Commentator, 24 March 1970.

convened in Kwangtung province at the end of April 1970, "call[ed] on the three peoples to strengthen their solidarity and wage a heroic and tenacious fight, . . . to defeat the *U.S. imperialists and their agents,* to defend their sacred national rights . . . so as to make Indochina a truly independent and peaceful area" (emphasis added).[8] The conference formalized North Vietnamese leadership over an Indochina-wide "liberation movement." And the North Vietnamese military press enthused: "Never before have the Indochinese people had" at the same time

> such powerful forces or enjoyed such world support and sympathy as they do now. Especially, the developing people's war in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia is creating a very great conventional power. . . . The comprehensive, continuous, and offensive impetus in the . . . revolutionary war in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia has dispersed and attacked the U.S. imperialists throughout Indochina, thus creating an extremely dangerous new battlefront.[9]

DRV leaders analyzed the strategy behind the U.S. decision to intervene in Cambodia and, beneath the anti-imperialist rhetoric, quite correctly attributed it to an attempt "at encircling and isolating the Vietnamese people's resistance, in the hope of salvaging the Vietnamization plan."[10] Nevertheless, the North Vietnamese military press predicted, the strategy would fail because it had forced the Americans to "spread out the forces . . . and become bogged down in Cambodia," permitting Vietnamese communist forces to "launch vigorous deep-penetration attacks against the Americans' and Puppets' dens and bases" in South Vietnam.[11] In effect, North Vietnamese military leaders were contending that the US/ARVN intervention into eastern Cambodia had not adversely affected the flow of supplies into the South and hence would not lead to the deceleration of VPA and Viet Cong activities which the Americans had calculated would follow.

The two-month direct American ground foray into eastern Cambodia (April 30–June 30, 1970) provided North Vietnam with a sufficient provocation to abrogate publicly Cambodia's neutrality in the Indochina war. According to Hanoi, the U.S.-instigated overthrow of Sihanouk combined with its invasion of Cambodia one month later had "obliterated Cambodia's independence and neutrality" and justified the formation of a

8. Indochinese Peoples' Conference Joint Declaration, Vietnam News Agency (VNA), 27 April 1970.

9. *Quan Doi Nhan Dan,* May 1970.

10. Pham Van Dong, speech to Prince Sihanouk in Hanoi, Hanoi Domestic Service, 28 May 1970.

11. *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* editorial, 6 June 1970, on the activities of the PRGSV.

united front of the Indochinese people to "completely defeat the U.S. aggressors and their puppet cliques and foil the wicked U.S. scheme to use the Indochinese people to fight the Indochinese people."[12]

Subsequent successful North Vietnamese military drives through much of the Cambodian countryside in 1971 were explained as a response to the "Nixon Doctrine," which was "widening their war to the whole of Indochina, turning this peninsula into a single battlefield." Premier Pham Van Dong declared that the Nixon Doctrine had actually provided the catalyst for uniting the Indochinese peoples, "giving mutual support and assistance, coordinating with one another in fighting, and attacking the U.S. imperialists and their stooges without letup."[13] More specifically, North Vietnamese leaders viewed the key component of America's Vietnamization policy to be South Vietnamese troops. In a revealing article in the military magazine *Quan Doi Nhan Dan,* Quyet Thong, a military analyst, contended that "any annihilation of the Saigon regular troops, be it on the South Vietnamese, Lao, or Cambodian battlefields, represents a common victory for the Indochinese peoples and a telling blow to the U.S. policy of Vietnamization of the war in South Vietnam and also to the Nixon Doctrine in Indochina."[14] The practical implication of this analysis was that North Vietnamese forces should engage in operations designed less to hold territory than to draw in South Vietnamese troops in such a manner that they would suffer high casualties. Both the Chenla I and Chenla II operations in Cambodia seemed to fit this scenario as ARVN troops were trapped in VPA ambushes along Highways 4 and 6 during attempts to rescue Cambodian forces which had become overextended and cut off from Phnom Penh. Similar debacles occurred at Snuol in June 1971 and in northern Quang Tri.[15]

Although North Vietnamese media generally viewed the widening of the Indochina war as an advantage in that it allowed them to operate more openly in Cambodia and Laos to maintain access routes to the Ho Chi Minh Trail, there was nevertheless considerable concern about possible negative propaganda effects of the Nixon Doctrine. DRV media had consistently stressed that Hanoi was the only legitimate defender of nationalism in Indochina and that the United States and its allies were bent on reinstituting alien imperialist domination. The withdrawal of American troops, however, would undercut the validity of this appeal. Hanoi possessed an additional although seldom articulated fear that if it did not succeed in

12. DRV Foreign Ministry statement released by VNA, 3 July 1970.

13. Premier Pham Van Dong, Peking 6 March rally speech released by NCNA, 10 March 1971.

14. *Quan Do Nhan Dan,* May 1971.

15. See the summary of ARVN defeats in Cambodia during 1971 as broadcast by the Hanoi Domestic Service, 31 Dec. 1971. For a similar litany of Cambodian army defeats in 1972, see the *Nhan Dan* editorial of 14 Nov. 1972.

"recovering" the South, then "U.S. policy in this region" would expand "to encircle the DRV in order to control the whole of Southeast Asia."[16] It appears, then, that there was some North Vietnamese belief that a separate North Vietnam would simply not be politically viable in the long run but would somehow come under the influence of an outside power, ostensibly the United States (but more realistically, perhaps, China).

This incipient fear of isolation and abandonment surfaced in a *Nhan Dan* editorial published only four days after President Nixon's visit to Peking was first announced. Its exposition of American strategy in Southeast Asia as perceived, and of the purpose of the President's projected trip, reflected the typical concern of a *small* state whose international posture could be partially constrained by the behavior of its allies as well as its enemies. The editorial merits a lengthy quotation:

> In a word, the "Nixon Doctrine" is the counterrevolutionary global strategy of U.S. imperialism, which consists in relying on the military force and war means of the USA, forming an alliance of the counter-revolutionary forces in each region, dividing the socialist countries, winning over one section and fitting it against another in order to oppose the national liberation movement, and carry out a counter-revolutionary peaceful evolution in the socialist countries.
>
> Applied in Asia it consists of rallying the counter-revolutionary forces in this region with Japanese militarism as the core to form a regional alliance spearheaded against the socialist countries and the liberation movement of the various nations. The prime target and also the first testing ground of this doctrine is South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Nixon's policy also consists of trying to achieve a compromise between the big powers in an attempt to make smaller countries bow to their arrangements.[17]

In what appeared to be an appeal to Peking, the editorial further insisted that compromise with the United States was unnecessary since "Vietnamization" of the war "is being broken by the peoples of the three Indochinese countries," so effectively that "the whole U.S.A. and the whole world are shouting aloud: stop the war of aggression in Vietnam and bring all U.S. troops home."

Soon after this initial "plea" to Peking not to undertake any substantive discussions on Indochina with the United States, *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* published a lengthy review of America's Asian strategy designed to show that the Americans would be unable to maintain a significant military presence in the region much longer. The magazine pointed to new strategic

16. Chalmers Roberts interview with DRV Minister Xuan Thuy in Paris, as transmitted by the VNA Paris office, 12 June 1971.
17. *Nhan Dan* editorial, 19 July 1971.

thinking in the Pentagon which required the United States to scale down its total military forces and shift much of its Asian strength either back to the United States or to western Europe. It warned its readers that "the 'Nixon Doctrine' considers the division of the socialist camp as its starting point and relies on regional partition to achieve its immediate goal of countering the national liberation movement and maintaining neocolonialism."[18] China was placed on notice that Hanoi would not tolerate any new attempt to partition Indochina—in the case of Cambodia, perhaps separating the sections east and west of the Mekong River—and would insist, going beyond both Moscow and Peking, that "today, only the communists can hold high the banner of genuine nationalism and democracy." The Nixon Doctrine was deemed particularly pernicious because it had "done its best to lend a hand to reformism, nationalism, [and] chauvinism, with a view to dampening the communists' revolutionary will and sowing dissension within the international communist and worker movement."

In sum, North Vietnamese officials feared that their Chinese and Soviet mentors were more interested in obtaining an American withdrawal from Indochina than a North Vietnamese victory. And, unless a North Vietnamese victory was forthcoming, internal political pressures in the DRV on the regime which had for so long justified onerous domestic sacrifices because of the reunification goal might be unbearable.

Once the Nixon administration removed U.S. manpower from the peninsula, it was feared the strategic desires of the two large communist powers would be met without satisfying the Vietminh political goal of dominant influence within Indochina. Thus, *Nhan Dan* pointedly remarked:

> One of the greatest contradictions of the "Nixon Doctrine" is that it wants other countries to surrender to its authority and to accept its demands while it is growing weaker and weaker. The United States still wants to expand its interventionist activities . . . and step up the activities aimed at dividing the socialist countries.[19]

Similarly, Viet Cong media expressed some concern over the development of an ARVN mobile force modeled on the U.S. First Air Cavalry Division, which would provide the capability to airlift some 15,000 troops from South Vietnam to Cambodia after South Vietnamese forces were withdrawn in early 1972.[20]

Nor were Hanoi's fears assuaged by the Nixon/Chou En-lai communiqué from Shanghai in February 1972. *Nhan Dan* pointed out on March 13 that the U.S. President had pledged in his foreign-policy report of February to

18. *Quan Doi Nhan Dan,* article on U.S. global strategy, 3 Aug. 1971. See also *Nhan Dan,* Commentator, 22 Aug. 1971.
19. *Nhan Dan,* 7 Jan. 1972.
20. Liberation Radio in Vietnamese, 12 Jan. 1972.

honor American bilateral security treaties as "the touchstone of regional stability in Asia" and only a few weeks after his visit to Peking had reaffirmed that the United States would not abrogate its commitments to other countries. South Vietnamese communist media also warned against falling for Nixon's "crafty maneuvers . . . to put one socialist country against another . . . to weaken the support of the national liberation movement in the world."[21]

Attitudes and activities of Vietnamese communists

Closely akin to its attitudes toward Phnom Penh, Saigon, and Washington is North Vietnam's image of its own activities as they relate to Cambodia. As in the cases of South Vietnam and Laos, the Northerners do not publicly admit their presence in Cambodia. However, as also in the former two countries, the Vietminh have apparently done much of the fighting, policy planning, and advising of the Cambodian Liberation Front.[22] Furthermore, captured North Vietnamese soldiers have related that they were told the purpose of the Cambodian war was to "reunite Indochina with Vietnam."[23]

Hanoi has tied its public output on the Vietnamese communist role in Cambodia to the mutual obligations inherent in the Indochinese Peoples' Conference of late April 1970, which formalized an alliance among the "liberation movements" of the three countries. As President Huynh Tan Phat of the PRGSV put it in a message to Chou En-lai, the purpose of the summit conference was to unite "the South Vietnamese people together with their blood-sealed compatriots in the North," who will "march shoulder to shoulder with the fraternal Cambodian and Laotian people . . . to drive out the U.S. aggressors from the Indochinese peninsula."[24] And DRV premier Pham Van Dong proffered the following pledge to Prince Sihanouk: "The Vietnamese people and the DRV Government, now as

21. Liberation Radio in Vietnamese, 20 March 1972. Even with the cessation of American bombing in Cambodia in mid-August 1973, Vietnamese communist media averred that the war could remain protracted and cited statements of American officials which promised to increase logistical aid to Phnom Penh. Apprehensions over the possibility of a reintroduction of ARVN forces into Cambodia were also expressed, implying concern once more about ground action in the eastern Cambodian communist staging areas. Ibid., 3 Aug. 1973, and *Nhan Dan*, 11 Aug. 1973.

22. From the beginning of Sihanouk's exile, North Vietnamese media have excised any references to Vietnamese communists on Cambodian soil in rebroadcasts of other sources. Thus, a speech by the Prince in Peking, carried by NCNA, acknowledging some Viet Cong incursions into Cambodia was edited by VNA in its release to omit those references (25 April 1970). See also Richard Dudman, *Forty Days with the Enemy*.

23. *New York Times*, 26 July 1970.

24. Hanoi Domestic Service, 14 June 1970.

always, unswervingly respect . . . the independence, peace, neutrality, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Cambodia within its present borders, and respect all national rights and the political regimen of Cambodia."[25]

Despite these public assurances, however, outside reports of Vietnamese communist behavior suggest that the DRV has other goals in mind for Cambodia. Thus, the North Vietnamese have deliberately drawn Phnom Penh and Saigon ground fire as well as American air bombardment into populated village areas by openly stationing forces in them and moving away only after the villages have been decimated.[26] The rationale behind this tactic may be to depopulate much of the countryside and increase the refugee flow into Phnom Penh, thus exacerbating the administrative burden on the Cambodian authorities while reducing the production of foodstuffs needed by the cities to survive. Depopulation of the countryside also suggests that North Vietnamese forces have not been notably successful in obtaining Cambodian allegiance. Reports from areas recovered by Phnom Penh forces convey a strange mixture of Vietnamese communist politeness and ruthlessness. For example, while paying for all food and services received and never requiring forced labor, the Vietminh occupiers of one village nevertheless openly murdered several people whom they branded as government sympathizers. All the victims were from another town, however, thus instilling fear but not outright hostility. Nor have VPA troops, it appears, capitalized effectively on pro-Sihanouk sentiment among the people. The Prince's portrait was seldom displayed in occupied villages, nor was the Cambodian flag flown at town meetings. Propaganda tended to be pro-Hanoi rather than Cambodian-liberation-oriented.[27] One defector reported witnessing instances of actual fighting between Khmer Rouge and North Vietnamese troops at Kompong Thom, Kompong Chom, Kratie, and Siem Reap, although these incidents were apparently minor and confined to lower-echelon personnel.[28]

Nor have attempts to win the support of the Buddhist clergy met with success. By May 1971 Phnom Penh authorities blamed the Vietnamese communists for "almost 300 monasteries destroyed, some 30 monks killed, almost 100 wounded and more than 400 forced to flee to Phnom Penh for refuge."[29] When, during the course of a Vietminh-sponsored meeting of bonzes in western Kompong Chhnang in November 1970, one outspoken monk refused to cooperate, he was killed on the spot—an incident which reportedly more than any other event served to alienate the entire Sangka

25. Hanoi Domestic Service, 28 May 1970.
26. Arnold Abrams, "The Terrible Thing . . . ," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 Dec. 1970.
27. Ibid., and *New York Times*, 26 March 1972.
28. Norton, "When the Truth Hurts," p. 23.
29. R. P. W. Norton, "Cambodia: Buddha's Burden," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 May 1971, pp. 6–7.

from the communists.[30] Monks who were interviewed by correspondents denied that government troops had taken refuge in pagodas and thus made them into military objectives. Some claimed that on the contrary, the communists had turned their pagodas into attack bases against government forces.

North Vietnamese military strategy in Cambodia changed after the first six months of the war when large frontal assaults were employed. American and South Vietnamese firepower forced the communists to revert to a second phase of general harassment and attack on selected military targets beginning in late 1970. This strategy was followed through the first half of 1971. After that time the VPA focused on isolating Phnom Penh and a few other provincial capitals by cutting communications and supply routes, thus denying the countryside to the government.

North Vietnam shifted the brunt of its military operations from South Vietnam to Laos and Cambodia in the last half of 1971, apparently to secure the western sections of the Ho Chi Minh Trail along the Laotian-Cambodian border. The communist offensive in Cambodia emulated the cyclical pattern in South Vietnam and Laos, with heavy fighting in the dry season, beginning in November, and a hiatus in the wet season when work is centered on rebuilding and extending the Trail into South Vietnam. Western intelligence experts identified elements of the First, Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth VPA divisions in Cambodia, although two of these were engaged exclusively in sanctuary protection along the South Vietnamese border. The total estimate of communist forces in Cambodia at the end of 1971 came to 55,000 North Vietnamese regulars, 15,000 Sihanoukists, and several thousand Khmer Rouges.[31]

An additional explanation for the shift of Vietnamese communist military activities to Cambodia may be found in what some American officials believed to be the relative success of the Vietnamization process in South Vietnam. That is, a combination of the bringing down of the number of American forces and the building up of indigenous regional troops in South Vietnam, plus a really effective land-to-the-tiller program, for the first time led to North Vietnam's increasing difficulties in motivating popular support at the local level. Consequently, North Vietnamese forces may have chosen to shift the battlefield to Laos and Cambodia, where intervening South Vietnamese troops would be in unfamiliar and hostile territory as outside

30. Ibid.

31. Judith Coburn, "Time Out for Lon Nol," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 Dec. 1971, p. 13. There was no evidence that the number of North Vietnamese forces had increased through the spring of 1973, although the fortunes of the insurgents had improved markedly. Beginning in late 1972, most Vietnamese communist forces withdrew to the eastern border sanctuaries, leaving frontline military action to the Khmer Rouge PLAF (with VPA advisers), who initiated and sustained thereafter direct engagements with the FANK.

invaders. A series of defeats for ARVN forces in Cambodia and Laos would have the additional benefit, from Hanoi's viewpoint, of undermining the credibility of Vietnamization and lowering the morale of South Vietnamese forces on their own soil.[32]

In a year-end summation of communist victories, the North Vietnamese military press prominently featured ARVN defeats in Snuol (May 1971) and Chenla II (December 1971) during which "the Saigon puppet forces proved unable to cope with the annihilating blows of the adversary, nor [could they] 'stand on their own feet' and serve as shock troops for the U.S. aggressors on the Indochina battlefield."[33] Communist successes in overcoming the Chenla II operation were presented by Khmer Rouge media as proof that North Vietnamese and Khmer Rouge forces could coordinate their fighting plans: "The brilliant victories on Route 6 prove that our regular forces, regional forces, and guerrilla forces have reached their full growth."[34] North Vietnamese media, by way of contrast, did not identify the friendly-forces components in their analyses of the Snuol defeat; hence no specific attention was even indirectly given to the Khmer Rouge segment of the "liberation forces." Rather VNA's focus was the poor performance of the Saigon and Phnom Penh troops, suggesting that Hanoi was more interested in publicizing the weaknesses of its Cambodian and South Vietnamese adversaries than in boosting the goals of its Khmer Rouge and Sihanoukist allies.

North Vietnam's attitude toward Sihanouk and the RGNUC

From the very beginning of Sihanouk's deposition, both the DRV and PRGSV continued to acknowledge him as the rightful head of state, whose position had been "sabotaged" by CIA-backed reactionaries while he was out of the country for reasons of "health."[35] (Of course, no mention was made of the real purpose of the Prince's trip to Moscow—the hope of bringing Soviet influence to bear on the Vietnamese communists to reduce their presence in Cambodia.) Hanoi did feel compelled indirectly to refute Phnom Penh's allegations against the North by citing Prince Sihanouk's denial from Peking that the Vietnamese were a source of danger to his country. *Nhan Dan's* Commentator insisted that such an argument "is aimed at preparing for the use of Cambodia by the Americans to oppose

32. The author is indebted to the late John P. Van, deputy U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam and chief U.S. civilian advisor to the II Corps Region (Central Highlands), for a lengthy exposition of this viewpoint in a personal interview in Lexington, Kentucky, in January 1972.
33. *Quan Doi Nhan Dan,* 31 Dec. 1971.
34. Voice of the FUNK in Cambodian, 31 Dec. 1971.
35. *Nhan Dan,* 14 March 1970.

the Vietnamese people's patriotic struggle."[36] Thus, North Vietnamese media interpreted the regime change in Cambodia as being primarily directed against their efforts in South Vietnam rather than as an internal Cambodian event.

During the course of Prince Sihanouk's first visit away from his Chinese exile to Hanoi, *Nhan Dan* set the tone for much of the DRV's subsequent propaganda by iterating the Vietminh's benign intentions toward the Prince's version of Cambodia: "mutual respect for the political regime of each country and noninterference in each other's internal affairs" as well as "support for the Khmer people's struggle to build an independent, peaceful, neutral, democratic and prosperous Cambodia."[37] The newfound importance of Cambodia for North Vietnam's Indochina goals was underscored by the chairman of the National Assembly, Truong Chinh, in an address of June 1970 which referred to the three Indochina states as "closely linked by mountains and rivers . . . just like lips and teeth, and . . . closely uniting and assisting one another on the same battle front against the U.S. imperialists."[38]

It appeared that Sihanouk's government-in-exile was being employed by DRV leaders to legitimate their unacknowledged control of the Cambodian component of the peninsula-wide battlefield. Premier Pham Van Dong came close to admitting the real situation in a *Morning Star* (London) interview on 13 July 1970, when he stated: "The three peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos are united in their struggle against the same enemy and for the same aims; the three countries have become one battlefield."

The consensus of most outside observers of the Cambodian war was that North Vietnam was only partially successful in creating a Khmer "liberation front." Militarily, the front had been able to field only piecemeal Cambodian detachments.[39] Thus, such stinging defeats for Phnom Penh and Saigon as the battles at Snuol and along Routes 4 and 6, as well as the daring and successful guerrilla attacks on Pochentang airport and the Sihanoukville petroleum complex, were all attributed by correspondents either to North Vietnamese regulars or Viet Cong forces. While these victories attest to the military acumen of the Vietnamese communists, they tell us nothing about either the military strength or political acceptability to the population of their Cambodian ally. CPLAF victories in 1973, however, attested to the growing military skill of the Cambodian insurgents.

Although Vietminh cadres appeared to control Khmer village affairs through most of 1970–71 according to U.S. officials in Cambodia, this

36. *Nhan Dan,* Commentator, 24 March 1970.
37. *Nhan Dan* and *Quan Doi Nhan Dan,* editorials, 26 May 1970.
38. Hanoi Domestic Service, 7 June 1970.
39. Robert Norton, "Leave Them or Alienate Them," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 22 May 1971, p. 24.

situation may have changed during 1972, when FANK forces (the Khmer Republic Army) virtually withdrew altogether from the countryside, leaving people who chose to remain in the villages either to the Vietminh in eastern Cambodia or the Khmer Rouge in the northwest. There were some reports of the latter organizing a local-level infrastructure on their own for the first time—a situation which could portend possible negotiations between the Phnom Penh government and a primarily Cambodian opposition rather than the Vietminh.[40] And by the spring of 1973 Sihanouk was claiming that the RGNUC/FUNK had established a permanent infrastructure through most of the countryside, with its own government, laws, tax structure, welfare, and economic activities.[41]

Meanwhile, VPA battlefield strategy in Cambodia seems to have been a source of experimentation for subsequent plans in South Vietnam and a subject of internal debate within the North Vietnamese military. For example, prior to the battle at Snuol in late May 1971, Vietminh forces—as mentioned earlier—engaged primarily in selective harassment of and quick attacks on specific military targets. At Snuol, in contrast, the communists returned to the frontal assault and large-scale set battles they had employed during the first six months of the Cambodian war.

Hanoi media discussed Snuol (though, of course, referring only to "Cambodian liberation forces") as a successful case in which on smooth terrain away from jungle canopies "liberation troops could still fight a big battle of annihilation in which they achieved very high combat efficiency." The victory marked a "new development" because it was achieved in a single set battle "launched in full daylight." Summarizing the significance of Snuol, North Vietnamese military leaders inferred a possible transference of the experience to other fronts: "The big battle fought and the great victory won by the Cambodian National People's Liberation Armed Forces in Snuol provide us with many valuable lessons in the ability to fight the enemy from a position of strength and . . . to concentrate our forces in order to fight big battles . . . of annihilation."[42]

The National Liberation Front radio rhapsodized that Snuol "was the first time in their combat history that the CPLAF wiped out an infantry battle group and a reinforced armored regiment . . . completely mastering and controlling a battlefield covering hundreds of square kilometers." Equally important, the radio commentary continued, was the ability of the communist forces to achieve the surrender of Saigon troops through battle-

40. Interviews with U.S. State Department officials recently stationed in Cambodia, May 1972. See also Edith Lenart, "Lon Nol's Dilemma," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 7 Oct. 1972, p. 20.

41. Sihanouk, speech at a Hanoi reception upon his return from the "liberated areas" of Cambodia, VNA, 10 April 1973.

42. *Quan Doi Nhan Dan,* military commentary, 4 June 1971.

field propaganda appeals.[43] In effect, the Vietnamese communists were claiming that the ARVN's defeat at Snuol proved the ineffectiveness of Vietnamization even on terrain that favored the substitution of technology for manpower. Hence, if Vietnamization could be overcome in Cambodia, it could also be defeated in South Vietnam. The subsequent ARVN flight from eastern Cambodia back to South Vietnam after the VPA spring offensive of 1972 seemed to bear out this prediction.[44]

The Sihanoukists and Khmer Rouge, then, appear to be clearly subordinated in Hanoi's public treatment to the concept of an Indochina-wide liberation movement, implicitly led by the VPA. Little was said of Sihanouk's own national goals or operations of the FUNK in the "liberated areas." When the Cambodian people's forces were mentioned, it was usually for the thinly disguised purpose of discussing the most effective military strategy for dealing with South Vietnamese troops and American air power, initially within Cambodia but by projection in Vietnam as well. In short, neither Sihanouk nor his RGNUC merited significant North Vietnamese interest. They provided a veil of legitimacy for VPA operations but little more.

It should be noted, however, that Hanoi's aloofness toward the RGNUC may have diminished in 1973 as the context of the Indochina war changed. With the removal of American ground forces from Vietnam in March and the near paralysis of administration of the Lon Nol government in Phnom Penh, DRV officials agreed to permit Sihanouk to visit the "liberated areas" of Cambodia, probably in order to arrange a working relationship with the increasingly victorious "liberation forces." That arrangement may well have been Sihanouk's agreement to titular leadership of a projected new socialist Cambodia in exchange for transfer of his still considerable popularity to the Khmer Rouge leadership.[45]

43. Liberation Radio, military editorial in Vietnamese, 5 June 1971.
44. *Quan Doi Nhan,* editorial, 14 Nov. 1972.
45. Sihanouk, speech, VNA, 10 April 1973. See also Sheldon W. Simon, "Cease-fire in Vietnam: A View from Hanoi," *International Perspectives* (Ottawa), May–June 1973.

Chapter VI. How China perceived Cambodia and the Indochina war

The widening of the Indochina war to include Cambodia occurred at a time when Chinese leaders were reassessing all their foreign-policy orientations in the aftermath of the Great Cultural Revolution. It provided new opportunities to exercise influence in the peninsula—particularly vis-à-vis the Soviet Union—at the apparent cost, however, of acquiescing in Vietminh primacy within the three-country insurgency. China's desire to see a U.S. withdrawal from mainland Southeast Asia coincided with its general ideological support for "national liberation movements" in the Cambodian case. These desiderata may have been somewhat offset, however, by the probability of the establishment of North Vietnamese dominance in Indochina once the Americans had gone. There may well have been symmetrical interests, then, behind Peking's decision to welcome Prince Sihanouk's government-in-exile and his choice of Peking as its headquarters, since neither Chinese nor Sihanoukist leaders were enthusiastic about the prospect of surrendering Cambodia to Vietnamese control. For Sihanouk, it would have meant the end of his country's independence—a policy he had so successfully developed for some fifteen years. For China, it would have meant a unified southwestern buffer area under a friendly government, but one strong enough to resist Chinese influence and probably willing to call for Soviet and even some Western assistance in postwar reconstruction. In sum, Chinese leaders have probably been cross-pressured between their desire for an American exit from Southeast Asia and a concern over a new North Vietnamese sphere of influence supplemented by new Soviet economic opportunities in the postwar period.

Sihanouk's Cambodia had never been viewed by China as ripe for revolution. The Prince's volatile nationalism was perceived favorably in Peking; and Cambodia was even included as a member of the anti-imperialist camp.[1] Chinese leaders believed that Cambodia was a reliable neighbor because of its self-imposed isolation from the West. It was unnecessary for the country to go communist so long as it remained cut off from Western ties. This generally defensive orientation toward Indochina was manifest as early as the 1954 Geneva Conference and was sustained through the 1962 Geneva Conference on Laos, at which the Chinese operated to consolidate communist gains rather than support any further DRV/Pathet Lao offensive.[2] Indeed, China's considerable logistical input to the war in Vietnam occurred only after the 1965 U.S. buildup in the South and bombing of the North.

1. Peter Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy*, p. 57.
2. Melvin Gurtov, "Sino-Soviet Relations and Southeast Asia: Recent Developments and Future Possibilities," p. 493.

Peking had encouraged Cambodian neutralism as early as 1956 in its post-Bandung aid program, which was designed to impress the countries of Southeast Asia with the advantages of dealing with the CPR. One astute observer of Cambodian foreign policy during this period claimed that there was some talk among Khmer officials that Peking had even promised to intercede on Phnom Penh's behalf should the Vietminh cause difficulties.[3]

The extension of the Indochina war to Cambodia fell within the strategic logic of Lin Piao's famous tract of September 1965, *Long Live the Victory of the People's War*. Lin argued for the efficacy of low-cost (from China's point of view) protracted guerrilla warfare against the United States in Southeast Asia as a way of neutralizing the American advantage in military technology. Guerrilla warfare, prosecuted by the Vietnamese communists, would drain the United States economically and politically at a very low threat level to Peking. Chinese leaders were even willing to antagonize their allies in order to keep the prospect of a confrontation with the United States at a low level. Thus, for example, they refused to permit North Vietnamese aircraft to use bases in southern China as sanctuary against American bombers after 1965.[4]

The desirability of Cambodia's independence to the CPR was underlined by the fact that even during the nadir of the Cultural Revolution when most of China's neighbors, including North Korea, were being upbraided in Red Guard wall papers, Chou En-lai managed to disavow publicly any Chinese ill will toward Cambodia.[5] Indeed, Peking's support for Sihanouk's United Front is best understood in terms of a continuation of China's foreign policy for Indochina with the pre-Cultural Revolution period designed to foster separate and independent but malleable regimes. Whereas general foreign-policy dicta in the Cultural Revolution required that all "liberation movements" pledge fealty to Mao's leadership and emulate the Chinese model, these strictures were not applied to the FUNK. Rather, the CPR fostered the Sihanouk operation in Peking as a part of its ongoing strategy to undermine pro-Western regimes rather than narrowly insisting that those engaged in liberation activities be led by a pro-Chinese communist party.[6]

There is further evidence that China has been concerned less with supporting ideologically compatible regimes than with insuring that the regimes it did support were viable and willing to remain independent of Western influence. In this context it is noteworthy that Chou En-lai waited some two and a half weeks after Sihanouk's decision to remain in Peking before announcing support for the government-in-exile.[7] An even longer

3. Roger M. Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy*, p. 118.
4. Donald S. Zagoria, *The Vietnam Triangle*, pp. 88–91.
5. Harold C. Hinton, *China's Turbulent Quest*, p. 155.
6. Van Ness, pp. 227–29.
7. Harry Harding, "China: Toward Revolutionary Pragmatism."

period elapsed before Peking severed diplomatie relations with Phnom Penh. According to Khmer Republic President Lon Nol, a Chinese emissary had conveyed a promise to him during this period that Peking would not interfere with the new regime provided it continued Sihanouk's policy toward the Vietnam war. Specifically, Phnom Penh was to (a) continue to facilitate the supply of Chinese military and medical aid to Vietnamese communist forces, (b) tolerate the continued presence of these forces in Cambodia, and (c) publicly support their cause. It was only when it became apparent that Lon Nol's government had no intention of maintaining a position cut off from Western support against Vietnamese communist encroachment that Peking severed relations on May 5, 1970, more than a month after Hanoi had severed them on March 28.[8]

When Peking opted to extend full support to Sihanouk and his Front, with the sponsorship of an Indochinese Peoples' Solidarity Movement in late April 1970, the Chinese were faced with an unprecedented political situation. For the first time, the CPR was providing full accommodations and supplies for a government-in-exile. Also for the first time, it had chosen to back an *Indochina-wide* liberation movement with all the advantages such an extended battlefield would provide for the DRV. The Chinese may have reasoned that it was better to formalize a peninsular "liberation front" with separate Cambodian and Laotian segments and mutual pledges of independence than tacitly to acquiesce in growing VPA control over the fighting throughout Indochina.

The decision to back Prince Sihanouk's movement may have been China's attempt to maintain the integrity of a future non-Vietnamese-eontrolled Cambodia. It is noteworthy that Chinese media have never referred to the Prince as an exile, but rather as the legitimate head of state, whose position had been usurped unconstitutionally. The Prince's numerous tours of China and visits to both North Korea and North Vietnam appear designed to dramatize to China's own population Peking's support for national liberation movements and to illustrate the Prince's complete freedom of movement as "a visiting head of state." Thus, one Western Asian specialist, who obtained an interview with the Prince at his Peking residence, noted that all arrangements were made through the Khmer embassy rather than the Chinese authorities and that the Prince had his own quarters separate from more general governmental accommodations.[9]

Support for the *separate* Indochina "liberation" struggles also provided currency for the CPR's claim that "many medium-sized and small countries which have long been bullied by the superpowers are getting united to wage various forms of struggle for the defense of their state sovereignty and

8. J. L. S. Girling, "Crisis and Conflict in Cambodia," pp. 358–59.
9. Alessandro Casella, "A Talk with Sihanouk," *New York Times Magazine,* 23 Jan. 1972, pp. 8–9.

Table 6.1. *Frequency rank-ordering of topics carried by Chinese media related to the Cambodian war, April 1970 to October 1972, as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report—Chinese People's Republic*

Theme issue	*Number*[a]	*Rank*
Attitude toward Cambodia within the Indochina front	27	1
Attitude toward Phnom Penh and its backers	10	2
Attitude toward Sihanouk	5	3

[a] The unit of analysis is the whole broadcast or newspaper transcript. Only those transcripts were selected which were primarily concerned with the Cambodian war.

national interests."[10] That is, support for Indochinese "self-determination" fitted in with the broader Chinese international strategy of serving as the self-designated leader of those developing states which hoped to avoid entanglements with the superpowers. China's generous treatment of Prince Sihanouk would symbolize its general benevolence toward small states whose independence from superior control was desired as much by the CPR as by their own leaders.

It would now be instructive to see whether the preceding interpretation of the motivations behind China's support for Sihanouk and the Indochina liberation movement are reinforced or modified by an analysis of Peking's media output on the Cambodian war (Table 6.1).

A simple comparison of the thematic breakdowns in Tables 5.1 and 6.1 shows that both Vietnamese communist and Chinese media focused on only a small number of topics dealing with the Cambodian war. While two of the three topics were similar in the two tables, the third topic diverged. Unlike the Vietnamese, the CPR did not seem concerned with its self-image vis-à-vis the Cambodian conflict. The ranking position also differed between the two tables. Whereas the North Vietnamese gave clear priority to their image of the Khmer, South Vietnamese, and American adversaries, the Chinese, in contrast, were much more concerned with the way in which Cambodia fitted into the total Indochina liberation movement.[11] The considerable attention disparity between these themes probably reflects the different roles played by Hanoi and Peking. The latter could afford to view Indochina as a strategic unit within the context of a regional balance of forces because the CPR was not directly involved in the hostilities. North Vietnam, however, was specifically engaged in a protracted conflict in

10. Chou En-lai, rally address on Indochina, carried by NCNA, 10 March 1971.

11. Peking devoted some 64 percent of its total media attention (as defined in this study) on the Cambodian war to the first-ranked theme.

which the military strength and political viability of its enemies constituted its most salient concern. China ignored any separate role for the Vietnamese communists in Cambodia in line with fact that the DRV's activities were unacknowledged and perhaps in line with Peking's own preference for minimizing Hanoi's dominant position within Indochina.

China's attitude toward Cambodia within the Indochina front

Peking's interpretation of Sihanouk's deposition by Lon Nol and his military and civilian backers fitted very well the mirror-image syndrome of how the United States and South Vietnam perceived Sihanouk's decision to form a government-in-exile. Each side accused the other of extending the war to encompass all of Indochina and of further polarizing the political forces of the peninsula. A Chinese-government statement deserves quotation at length to illustrate this syndrome.

> The reactionary coup d'état staged by the Cambodian rightist clique on March 18, 1970, against Head of State Samdech Norodom Sihanouk was engineered single-handedly by the Central Intelligence Agency of U.S. imperialism. This is an important and long-premeditated step taken by the Nixon government in its scheme to extend its war of aggression against Vietnam to the whole of Indochina. It is aimed at turning Cambodia into a colony of the United States and using its lackey the Lon Nol–Sirik Matak rightist clique to coordinate with the U.S. aggressor troops and puppet troops in South Vietnam in its scheme to stamp out the Vietnamese people's war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation, and further at pulling together the puppets of South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand in a vain attempt to turn the three Indo-Chinese countries and the whole Indo-Chinese peninsula into an important military base for its aggression against China and other Asian countries.[12]

In Chinese eyes, then, the overthrow of Sihanouk and the American/South Vietnamese intervention into eastern Cambodia were part of a single strategy designed to widen the war to all of Indochina in order to gain continuing access to the tributaries of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and close the port of Sihanoukville (Kompong Som) to communist supplies. The Chinese seemed to perceive U.S. actions in Cambodia as part of a pincers movement along with South Vietnam to neutralize the supply routes and sanctuaries the Americans believed essential for Hanoi's battlefield operations. Control of Cambodia, according to this view, would ensure the military survival of at least the two southern corps areas (III and IV) of South Vietnam.

12. Statement of the Government of the Chinese People's Republic, NCNA, 28 April 1970.

The best way to counteract the American strategy of widening the war was to form a "liberation united front" among all Indochinese progressive movements so that "the Vietnamese people and the peoples of Laos and Cambodia, uniting closely, fighting shoulder to shoulder, and *persevering in protracted people's war* [emphasis added], will certainly overcome all difficulties and win complete victory in their war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation." In order to assure the ultimate victory of the Front, China pledged "all-out support and assistance" after its formation at the Indochinese People's Summit Conference in April 1970.[13]

Two Chinese road networks from Yunnan into the Pathet-Lao-controlled areas of Laos and one from North Vietnam which linked up with the Chinese-built artery at Moung Sai in Laos were constructed during 1970–71. Their existence underscored Peking's efforts to draw the Indochinese insurgents together and to serve as their major supplier.[14] These lengthy Chinese road construction activities suggested that Peking foresaw a drawn-out Indochinese struggle in which the CPR's influence would depend greatly on its ability to supply the insurgents with the matériel they needed to stay the distance.

Pathet Lao victories in the southern Attopeu border region were greeted by Peking as creating precisely the kind of strategic regions essential for defeating the United States: "the liberated areas in lower Laos are joined with the liberated areas in northeast Cambodia and the liberated areas of South Vietnam, thus creating a favorable condition for the war against U.S. aggression."[15] The Chinese seemed to be recalling their own revolutionary heritage, in which border regions proved to be safe base areas against their Japanese and Kuomintang adversaries, who were unable to coordinate across border jurisdictions in their efforts against the communists.[16] Furthermore, Chinese media pointed out, with all of Indochina as a battlefield, the advantage lay with the insurgents, who could attack their enemies wherever and whenever they chose: "The U.S. aggressors are utterly in the passive position of a sitting duck."[17]

Chinese leaders perceived an additional benefit in an Indochina-wide liberation front for their broader foreign-policy objective of creating and leading an Asia-wide progressive movement to the exclusion of the Soviet Union. Chou En-lai defined the components of the movement to include

13. Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien, address at a Peking rally celebrating the 16th anniversary of the DRV, NCNA, 3 Sept. 1970.

14. Kim Woodward, "At Thailand's Backdoor," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 14 Nov. 1970, pp. 34–35.

15. NCNA, 5 Jan. 1971.

16. For an analysis of this period, see Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power.*

17. *People's Daily,* Commentator, 4 Feb. 1971, and a *People's Daily* editorial stressing the same theme on 13 Feb. 1971.

Indochina, North Korea, and the CPR during the April 1970 summit conference, because all "are confronted with aggression and intervention by U.S. imperialism and its lackeys."[18] The fact that the USSR did not recognize Sihanouk's Peking-based government-in-exile gave additional credibility to China's insistence that Asian communist movements must fend for themselves.

The Russians reacted predictably to this Chinese bid to preempt the backer role in Indochina. They insisted that the Asian peoples engaged in anti-imperialist struggles must rely on "all socialist countries and all peace-loving and antiwar forces throughout the world to take unified action."[19] Nevertheless, the highest Chinese leaders repeatedly asserted that "China, Korea, and the three Indo-Chinese countries . . . always stand by each other in our struggle against the common enemy." In a banquet address to some defecting Cambodian diplomats, Vice-Premier Li Hsien-nien declared: "Come what may, the 700 million Chinese people will always be your most reliable friend and powerful backer in your struggle against U.S. imperialist aggression. The vast land of China is your most reliable rear."[20]

Chinese efforts appeared to bear fruit at the twentieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, in P'yongyang, where representatives of the Indochinese communist movements and China met without the Soviets. Speeches at the celebration emphasized *united Asian Communist action* against the United States and "Japanese militarism," although the speeches of the Indochinese delegates carefully avoided any overtly critical comment on the USSR. The deputy premier of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, Kim Il, summed up the tenor of the meeting when he quoted Kim Il Sung as stating "if the peoples of various Asian countries carrying on revolution, including Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, China, and Korea, form a united front and join in dealing collective blows at United States imperialism they will be able to knock it down and firmly insure the victory of our common cause."[21]

While Peking insisted that Asian communists could be self-sufficient and that China itself was a dependable supplier of matériel for insurgent operations, Chinese leaders also stressed that the CPR would not become directly involved in military operations. That is, because China was a benevolent backer, it had no imperialist designs itself. Therefore, any direct Chinese intervention would be not only unnecessary but subject to misinterpretation, and might undermine the anti-imperialist image Peking has chosen to project in international politics in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution.

18. Chou En-lai, April 26 banquet address to the Indochinese People's Summit Conference, NCNA, 3 May 1970.

19. Typical of Soviet commentary was this Radio Moscow broadcast in Mandarin on 30 May 1970.

20. NCNA, 27 May 1970.

21. Cited in the *New York Times*, 28 June 1970.

Despite temporary setbacks such as the invasion of southern Laos in early 1971, during which the South Vietnamese forces were routed in any case, the Chinese military press abjured any new role for the CPR, confining itself to the statement that "the peoples of the three Indochinese countries have the initiative in the war firmly in their hands. U.S. imperialism is bound to fail in Indochina."[22]

China was trying to avoid the horns of a potential dilemma among the three policies of backing the Indochinese Peoples' Front, attempting to contain North Vietnam's domination of Indochina, and simultaneously pursuing a détente policy with the United States. Particularly after the announcement in mid-1971 of President Nixon's visit to Peking, Chinese statements on Indochina became formally correct but somewhat circumspect and even unenthusiastic. The following excerpt from a speech by Chou En-lai to visiting DRV Premier Pham Van Dong is illustrative:

> The Indochina question is one of U.S. aggression versus the Indochinese peoples' resistance to aggression. The war in Indochina was caused by U.S. aggression, and it will end only with the United States stopping its aggression. The Indochina question can be settled only if the United States withdraws all its aggressor troops and vassal troops from South Vietnam and the whole of Indochina and totally ceases supporting the puppet cliques so that the Indochinese peoples may settle their own internal affairs independently and free from foreign interference. In this connection, the joint declaration of the Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples, the four-point proposition of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the seven-point peace proposal of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, the five-point political solution put forward by the Laotian Patriotic Front, the five-point declaration of the Cambodian head of state, Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, and the political program of the National United Front of Cambodia have set forth explicit propositions for settling the questions of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.[23]

Chou's remarks are especially noteworthy for what they did not include. There is no insistence that the Saigon government be ousted by the Americans, for example. And there is only a pro forma endorsement of the various Indochinese communist peace plans by referring to them as "explicit propositions" for settling the peninsular war. Especially revealing is a later statement in the same address in which Chou underscored the Chinese desire for the maintenance of separate Indochinese political movements rather than a sphere of Vietminh control: "The peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos are the masters of Indochina; you, and you alone are en-

22. *Liberation Army Daily*, editorial, 15 Feb. 1971.
23. NCNA, 24 Nov. 1971.

titled to decide the affairs of your *respective* countries" (emphasis added).

The subsequent joint communiqué, capping Sino-Vietnamese talks on military and economic aid for 1972, revealed once more the North Vietnamese apprehension that the Nixon policy of Vietnamization would meet the primary Chinese goal of a reduced American military presence in Asia before the DRV was able to take over the South and assert peninsula-wide dominance. Thus, "the Vietnamese side" pledged a "shoulder to shoulder fight with the Lao and Cambodian peoples to firmly and thoroughly shatter the 'Nixon Doctrine' in Indochina," while the Chinese side more circumspectly kept its options open by promising "determined support" for the Indochinese people "as long as the U.S. aggressors do not stop their interference and aggression against Indochina."[24] The Chinese may well have been weighing in their own deliberations what the trade-off possibilities might be between some residual American influence in Indochina and a peninsula controlled by a friendly but increasingly independent North Vietnam.

Moreover, the DRV spring offensive of 1972 across the demilitarized zone into South Vietnam, an offensive heavily dependent on Soviet-supplied petroleum and weaponry, meant that Moscow had probably more than balanced Peking's influence in Indochina. Indeed, the longer the war remained unresolved and the longer Sihanouk and his entourage remained isolated from events in Cambodia's "liberated areas," the more it appeared that the Prince's presence in Peking could become at best an anachronism and at worst an embarrassment and an obstacle to the CPR in establishing relations with the Hanoi-oriented leadership of the FUNK. Although Chinese statements continued to emphasize Sihanouk's role as head of state throughout 1972, beginning in August Peking media regularly linked the RGNUC in the Chinese capital explicitly with Cambodian-based Khieu Samphan as deputy prime minister and minister of national defense.[25] Chinese leaders may have hoped that the Khmer Rouge segment of the Front could develop a common goal with Sihanouk in continuing the indigenous "liberation" of Cambodia even after a Vietnam cease-fire and settlement (to be discussed in Chapter VIII).

China's attitude toward Phnom Penh and its backers

One of the two secondary themes in Peking's media output on the Cambodian war concerned the character of the Lon Nol government and the motivations of its Washington and Saigon allies. It became evident soon

24. Joint communiqué of the Central Committees of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist Parties and Chinese and Vietnamese Governments, NCNA, 26 Nov. 1971.

25. NCNA, 5 Aug. 1972. To the author's knowledge, Chinese comment on the RGNUC prior to this date virtually ignored the Cambodian-based segment of the Sihanouk "government." Subsequently, all such commentary regularly mentioned Khieu Samphan along with Sihanouk and his "prime minister," Penn Nouth.

after the deposition of Prince Sihanouk that the Chinese cared less about the question of who ruled Cambodia than about the policy toward the Vietnam war followed by any Cambodian government.[26] Lon Nol's revelations about Chinese attempts to negotiate support for his regime in return for the continuation of Sihanouk's policy, tolerating Vietnamese communist activities in Cambodia, reinforces this interpretation of China's major interest.

Peking's comment on the Djakarta Conference viewed it as a ploy to put the pressure of international public opinion on the Vietnamese communists to leave their base areas in Cambodia deemed essential for the prosecution of the war in South Vietnam. American and South Vietnamese intervention in eastern Cambodia, according to this view, conveniently neutralized any Vietnamese communist violation of Cambodia's sovereignty. To call for the withdrawal of all foreign forces, as did the Djakarta Conference communiqué, was blatant hypocrisy in the eyes of Peking, since "it was precisely U.S. imperialism and its lackey, the South Vietnam puppet clique, which brazenly sent troops in invade Cambodia and trampled upon the sovereignty, independence, neutrality, and territorial integrity of Cambodia."[27]

The Phnom Penh regime, then, was seen by the CPR as a passive actor, employed by the United States to justify the widening of the Indochina war, but actually serving to deepen American involvement in the quagmire. As Chou En-lai put it in a Hanoi banquet address: "Now, in expanding the war to the whole of Indochina, the enemy has to divide its forces to cope with the three peoples; . . . this will give rise to a new situation which will drive the enemy still deeper into a passive position, providing good opportunities for the three peoples' armed forces to destroy the enemy forces one by one."[28] In effect, Chou was articulating the position that a peninsular war provided an even greater advantage to the insurgents than the concentration of the war in the South, for in the wider war theater, the United States and Saigon would have to stretch their defense forces ever more thinly, ensuring insurrectionist victory wherever the Vietnamese communists chose to strike.

One indication of the accuracy of Chou's designation of the role of Phnom Penh was the Khmer Republic's decision to enter into a border security agreement with Thailand, permitting the latter to harass Vietnamese communist forces along the lengthy northwestern border, since no Cambodian troops were capable of operating in the region.[29] To Peking

26. For example, an early NCNA commentary on the Lon Nol government focused not on its overthrow of the Prince but rather its attacks against the Vietnamese communists and its "violation" of Sihanouk's nonaligned posture. NCNA, 30 March 1970.

27. *People's Daily,* Commentator, and NCNA, 20 May 1970.

28. NCNA, 10 March 1971.

29. A report of the agreement was broadcast over the Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai, 19 Jan. 1972. Peking's reaction was released by NCNA two days later.

and perhaps to Hanoi and Washington as well, it appeared that Cambodia was being carved into spheres of de facto foreign military control, the primary force of military occupation being North Vietnamese, with smaller regions under the sporadic control of Saigon, and Bangkok emerging as a potential new actor in northwestern Cambodia.

Peking's attitude toward Prince Sihanouk

Prince Sihanouk's status and influence in Peking were somewhat unclear. One stream of evidence saw the Prince being treated with considerable respect as a visiting head of state. Another, however, suggested that he was not privy to high-level Chinese discussions on the Indochina war and was probably informed of decisions only after they were made. Thus, for example, when Chou En-lai first gave notice that Peking would support the FUNK in the course of a P'yongyang speech, Prince Sihanouk cabled his thanks in a message which plainly revealed that the Premier's announcement in North Korea was the first the Prince had heard of the CPR decision.[30] Even then, it will be recalled, Peking waited another full month before formally severing diplomatic relations with Phnom Penh and endorsing a peninsula-wide united front.[31]

Once the Front had been created, Peking provided full support for its relatively moderate political program of (a) coalition government and (b) respect for private property. But more important, the CPR was particularly pleased with Sihanouk's insistence that the Front would agree to no territorial division of Cambodia, but rather promised to prosecute the war to complete victory.[32] Peking's decision to support the Prince as a popular leader of a coalition exile government, then, served to extend the base of appeal for the "anti-imperialist" forces in Cambodia, thus increasing the prospects of uniting all "progressive" forces under a single banner against the Phnom Penh government. The strategy, however, met with mixed results. Clearly, the ability to use the Prince's name provided an advantage to the Vietnamese communists in recruiting efforts at the village level. However, many reports have shown that the indigenous Khmer Rouge insisted on maintaining a separate organization and separate military operations, probably out of fear that subordination of their relatively small numbers to Hanoi would lead to assimilation of their movement. It would be instructive

30. NCNA, 9 April 1970.

31. Chou En-lai's message to the RGNUC/FUNK, NCNA, 5 May 1970.

32. Chou En-lai's address to Prince Sihanouk on the 17th Cambodian anniversary, NCNA, 9 Nov. 1970. The fact that Chou has so frequently been Peking's spokesman on matters related to the Indochina war lends credibility to Chong-do Hah's argument that Chou, more than the other Chinese leaders, wished to see Peking directly involved in the Indochina war as a major supporter. See his, "The Dynamics of the Cultural Revolution," pp. 205–6.

to discern whether Peking tried to supply the Khmer Rouge separately from Hanoi.

One of China's major residual benefits, derived from its role as the prime backer of Sihanouk, was the embarrassment of the Soviet Union. (True, much of this embarrassment was reversed in late 1971 when the Soviets backed the popular and successful Bangladesh liberation struggle against a Chinese-supported Pakistani effort at military suppression and through the spring 1972 DRV offensive in South Vietnam, so heavily dependent on Soviet supplies.) Peking was able to unify and preempt the prime support position for an Indochina front while the Russians—Hamlet-like—procrastinated, unable to decide how far to support the Prince. Although the Soviets produced favorable media comment on Cambodian "liberation" activities, they refrained from either breaking with Phnom Penh or establishing any formal ties with Sihanouk, probably because of his complete dependence on Peking. The Soviets publicly stated that the aid extended to the DRV increased from 1970 "owing to the stepped-up U.S. aggressive war in Indochina."[33] However, the Russians appeared satisfied with permitting the DRV to determine the allocation of Soviet aid among the Indochinese battlefields. And, as mentioned above in Chapter IV, the Prince lamented the fact that only minimal supplies seemed to trickle down to the CPLAF, given the priorities of the North Vietnamese supply system.

In sum, it appears that Chinese leaders were somewhat ambivalent in their attitudes toward the Cambodian war. On the positive side, support for the Indochina Front placed China in a prime advisory position for the politics of a region deemed essential for the CPR's security. Provision of moral and material support also buttressed Peking's claim to benevolent leadership of an anti-imperialist third-world movement and may have helped to regain much of the ideological goodwill China had lost among leftist leaders of underdeveloped states during the Cultural Revolution. The one important negative feature of China's backing for the Indochina liberation movement was Peking's tacit acquiescence in a probable future dominant role for Hanoi in mainland Southeast Asia. Chinese leaders may well have concluded, however, that the costs to China's own regional ambitions were acceptable in return for an American military withdrawal and an opportunity for Peking to refocus its energies on Sino-Soviet relations, problems of domestic development, and a more globally oriented foreign policy.

33. Radio Moscow in Vietnamese, 10 July 1970. Western estimates put Soviet aid to North Vietnam at $430 million in 1970, of which $70 million was in arms and $360 million in aid. The 1971 rate is estimated at $100 million in military goods and $450 million in economic aid. China's aid in 1971 is estimated at $200 million, split about evenly between military and economic items. See the *New York Times*, 13 Feb. 1972.

Chapter VII. How the Americans perceived Cambodia: From Vietnamization to commitment

An analysis of American perceptions of the Cambodian war must follow an approach somewhat different from that used to assess other actors in the preceding chapters. Because mass media in the United States are privately owned and operated, it would be invalid to infer any relationship between their output on Cambodia and official American views. Therefore, no thematic frequency count can be taken as a firm basis for judging salience. The loss of these data, however, is compensated for by a different richness available to the analyst of U.S. verbal output: the ability to observe views that diverge widely because they are expressed by persons who fill widely divergent roles.

A U.S. official's view of Cambodian involvement in the Indochina war may have been largely determined by his governmental vantage point—military, diplomatic, presidential office—and his constituency—executive branch, Congress, and subgroups among these. If this hypothesis is accurate, then one should be able to discover and explain varying U.S. assessments of the importance of Cambodia and the kind of policy which should be applied to that country in terms of perceived missions or responsibilities of U.S. governmental units involved. For example, the modal military view might have assessed Cambodia in terms of its usefulness in diminishing Vietnamese communist access to South Vietnam; the modal diplomatic view might have been concerned with the effect of a wider war on a negotiated settlement; and the modal congressional view would assess the effects of a war in Cambodia on the prospects for U.S. troop withdrawal from Indochina. By examining statements of representatives of each of these governmental subgroups as they appear in the press or such official publications as the *Department of State Bulletin,* the analyst can see whether American policy debate was moving toward or away from consensus and the relationship between the debate and policy implementation. That is, if dissensus existed between the Congress and the Executive, were policy compromises forced on the latter which weakened the Executive initiative without, at the same time, meeting congressional preferences? What I am positing, then, is that the U.S. government was not of one mind (or even two minds) about the Cambodian war and that manifest differences in the perception of Cambodia's involvement on the Indochina battlefield were translated into policy stops and starts which rendered it difficult for both allies and enemies to predict subsequent phases of U.S. commitment.

Little empirical work has been done to determine which variables U.S.

officials themselves considered to be most important in dealing with other states, that is, in formulating foreign policy. In the early 1960's, prior to heavy American involvement in Vietnam, Lloyd Jensen interviewed some eighty-four middle-level officials in the U.S. departments of State and Defense. One of the questions posed was what characteristics of other states would most influence Communist decisionmakers. Most of the officials, and a particularly large number of the Defense Department respondents, cited the power capabilities of adversaries to be the most important consideration for communist officials.[1] Thus, it would appear that American policymakers, in dealing with communist opponents, may have been predisposed toward the threat or use of military force in the belief that it would be the most salient variable for changing their adversaries' behavior. The use of air bombardment in both South and North Vietnam beginning in 1965 fits this explanation of American military views on how to deal with a communist opponent—by undertaking military action rather than focusing on such other variables as competitive political and economic appeals to the population under contention.[2]

An emphasis on power or military solutions may also account for the early (1954) American decision to train and equip a 175,000-man conventional army in South Vietnam, well beyond the country's economic and administrative capabilities to maintain, and thus to entail indefinite dependence on the United States and avoid the necessity of grappling with the underlying social malaise on which Vietnam's insurgency fed. The subsequent emphasis of U.S. military strategists on costly search-and-destroy operations through 1968 seemed to be designed to vindicate the military planners' argument that a U.S. military victory in South Vietnam was feasible.[3]

It was finally the realization that a military victory in Vietnam was infeasible (or at least too costly in human lives and treasure and too risky in terms of potential Chinese involvement) which led to a reassessment on the part of the Nixon administration of how American commitments could be maintained in East Asia at both reduced cost and reduced risk. The results were a loose series of statements and clarifications from both the President and Secretary of State Rogers, initiated on Guam in July 1969 and periodically refined as the Asian situation changed. All of these statements were subsumed under the rubric *Nixon Doctrine*. A later elaboration of the "doctrine" ran as follows:

1. Cited in Davis B. Bobrow, "Liberation Wars, National Environment, and American Decision Making," in Tang Tsou, II, 327–33.

2. See Hilsman's discussion of the "military-political" distinction in U.S. Vietnam strategy in his "Two American Counterstrategies to Guerrilla Warfare: the Case of Vietnam," in Tang Tsou, II, 281, 289.

3. An eloquent critique of this U.S. military policy toward Vietnam and its ultimate abandonment is found in Townsend Hoopes, *The Limits of Intervention,* esp. pp. 67, 99, 133. See also J. L. S. Girling, "Nixon's 'Algeria.' "

> The Nixon Doctrine provides that the United States will reduce its presence, particularly its military presence, in areas where we're overextended. In those cases, we will give those countries military and economic aid to support their budgets and armed forces, because when we withdraw Americans from such a country it causes quite a serious problem. In these cases, we will help them upgrade their military establishments so that those countries don't feel insecure as a result of our withdrawal, but will do it in a gradual and orderly way.
>
> We say to a country: "Now you have to defend yourself against subversion, guerrilla attacks and so forth. Our treaty commitment with you applies to an attack by a major power."[4]

In his 1971 foreign-policy report to the nation, Secretary Rogers broke the Nixon Doctrine into two components: the first proffered the American nuclear deterrent to allies (an ostensible U.S. policy since the early days of NATO) and also to any "nation whose survival we consider vital to our security and the security of the region as a whole." One part of the Nixon Doctrine, then, served somewhat ambiguously to extend unilaterally the U.S. nuclear deterrent to those states (unspecified) considered "vital" for American security. More germane to this study of insurgency and nonnuclear war was the Nixon Doctrine's second component, which was articulated with the unsatisfactory Vietnam experience in mind. It appeared designed to achieve the familiar Vietnam war goal of maintaining a friendly regime in power without, however, committing U.S. combat forces. As the Secretary of State put it: "In cases involving other types of aggression we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested and as appropriate. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense."[5]

There were two assumptions of the Nixon Doctrine which had to be met if it was to have any success. The first concerned the internal legitimacy of any regime the United States chooses to support. That regime must possess the capability to mobilize its own manpower to stave off external aggression and/or externally backed domestic insurgency and the administrative apparatus to absorb and distribute in a reasonably equitable manner the military and economic assistance provided by the United States. The second assumption of the doctrine was that the U.S. Congress would be amenable to substituting the appropriation of matériel for manpower in order to protect foreign governments deemed vital to the United States from being overthrown.

4. Secretary of State Rogers, interview in *U.S. News and World Report,* 22 Nov. 1971, p. 32.

5. William P. Rogers, *United States Foreign Policy, 1969–1970,* Department of State Publication 8575 (March 1971), pp. 36–37.

It seemed clear, however, that the Nixon Doctrine was not really a strategy; it offered no criteria by which U.S. officials could determine the importance of countries or regions for American security. Nor did the doctrine define the kind of world order deemed desirable by the United States and ways of achieving such an order. At best the doctrine was a statement of qualified military disengagement and the substitution of American treasure for lives. At worst the doctrine comprised a loose collection of ambiguous statements by which neither allies nor enemies could predict what situations would lead to what kinds of American intervention.

The first practical manifestation of the doctrine began with the Vietnamization program in March 1969, by which the President reversed the military priorities of the Johnson administration and reduced the American combat role in Vietnam in exchange for a substantial upgrading of the training and equipment of ARVN forces. Total U.S. manpower in East Asia declined markedly under this new policy, from 740,000 in January 1969 to an estimated 420,000 in July 1971.[6]

If the first application of the Nixon Doctrine was the Vietnamization program, then its first full test was probably the U.S. decision to intervene in Cambodia and back the Lon Nol government. An examination of U.S. governmental perceptions of the relationship of events in Cambodia to the Vietnam war before, during, and after the intervention should yield some understanding of whether U.S. decisions with respect to Cambodia were made on the basis of a coherent new policy (the Nixon Doctrine) or rather were the product of the exigencies of interagency politics by which different units of the U.S. government perceived different potential costs and benefits from involvement in Cambodia—the Nixon Doctrine serving as a post hoc rationalization rather than as a guide to policy.

One insight into the underlying assumptions and hence limits of the Nixon Doctrine comes from the President's own view of the close relationship between U.S. international obligations and U.S. prestige when he announced the decision to intervene in Cambodia:

> We will not react to this threat to American lives merely by plaintive diplomatic protests. If we did, the credibility of the United States would be destroyed in every area of the world where only the power of the United States deters aggression. . . .
>
> Does the richest and strongest nation in the history of the world have the character to meet a direct challenge by a group which rejects every effort to win a just peace, ignores our warning, tramples on solemn agreements, violates the neutrality of an unarmed people and uses our prisoners as hostages?

6. Ibid., pp. 37, 49.

> If we fail to meet this challenge, all other nations will be on notice that despite its overwhelming power the United States, when a real crisis comes, will be found wanting.[7]

In effect, the President was saying he would violate his own strictures if he perceived that enemy capability and intent to take U.S. lives in battle appeared imminent. The logic of this position implied that U.S. forces might engage in battle across South Vietnam's borders as long as they remained in South Vietnam. And as the number of American troops diminished in Vietnam, any perceived threat to those which remained increased proportionally.

U.S. military intelligence on Vietnamese communist sanctuaries in eastern Cambodia went back to 1965, when the communists were first developing safe havens there. Beginning in 1968, Prince Sihanouk himself undertook to protest publicly against this violation of his country's sovereignty and neutrality. An increased tempo of protests by both the Prince and General Lon Nol during 1969 and early 1970 proved to be crucial for the subsequent American legal rationale that the Saigon/Washington intervention into eastern Cambodia was not a violation of Cambodian neutrality. During 1969, Sihanouk even went so far as to provide American and South Vietnamese officials with information on the location and activities of the communist forces in Cambodia, urging the United States to put pressure on the sanctuaries and promising not to complain so long as no Cambodians were harmed.[8] (American bombing in this period was revealed in 1973.)

Briefly, the U.S. government argument ran that since the Vietnamese communists were using sections of eastern Cambodia for training, supply, and even manufacturing facilities to prosecute the war in the South, and since the legitimate Cambodian government had tried unsuccessfully to deny such sanctuary in order to regain full sovereignty and neutrality, the offended parties (the United States and Republic of Vietnam) had the right to strike at the sanctuaries. These strikes did not violate Cambodian sovereignty, according to this view, because it had already been usurped by the communists in that region. Prince Sihanouk's own statement that even Cambodian officials could not enter the sanctuary areas without special permission and escort from the Vietnamese was cited to validate the argument.[9]

The actual combined American/ARVN incursion into Cambodia was preceded by a series of shifting U.S. official perceptions of the importance

7. Nixon quoted, ibid., pp. 382–83.
8. Douglas Pike, "Cambodia's War," p. 18.
9. For a full exposition of the American legal view of the Cambodian intervention, see Pike, "Cambodia's War," pp. 3–7. See also, U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Documents Relating to the War Power of Congress, the President's Authority as Commander-in-Chief and the War in Indochina* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, July 1970), pp. 127–31.

of the sanctuaries as a threat to Vietnamization and the importance of sustaining the new military regime in Phnom Penh against Vietnamese communist attacks. The latter concern, particularly, appeared to violate the premises of both Vietnamization and Cambodian neutrality.

The chronology of troop movements and skirmishes on both sides of the border prior to the full-scale intervention is instructive insofar as these movements became primary stimuli to American military leaders' perceptions of and reports to Washington on the nature of a Cambodian-based threat to the Mekong Delta region of South Vietnam, as well as prospects for successful Vietnamization.[10] Thus, on April 1, 1970, Vietnamese communist moves against Cambodian border posts—one week after Sihanouk's Peking announcement of the formation of a "liberation front"—was interpreted by the U.S. Command in Saigon as designed to secure control of a corridor from the Fishhook area near Laos in the north to the Gulf of Siam in the south. On April 5, ARVN troops penetrated some ten miles into Cambodia, the United States disclaiming any support role. On the fourteenth, the first combined ARVN-Cambodian operation in the eastern border area coincided with a new thrust by Vietnamese communist forces westward toward Phnom Penh.

According to Robert Semple, Jr., of the *New York Times,* Pentagon officials were attempting to persuade the President during the same period of March–April 1970 that the replacement of Sihanouk by Lon Nol provided a "political opportunity" for a military assault on the sanctuaries, thus buying time to continue the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the III Corps Region of South Vietnam. The President's announcement on April 20 of the exit of another 150,000 troops from Vietnam by June 1971 lent weight to the Pentagon's viewpoint, particularly as communist attacks on eastern Cambodian towns reinforced fears that the border was becoming one long, contiguous base operation.[11] In the course of his nationally televised address, on April 20, the President presaged his action of ten days later: "If I conclude that increased enemy action jeopardizes our remaining forces in Vietnam, I shall not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation." Nevertheless, in what was an example of either complete lack of interagency coordination among State, Defense, and the White House or possibly an indicator that the President had still not made up his own mind, Secretary Rogers told the Senate Foreign Relations committee on

10. A chronology of U.S., ARVN, and Vietnamese communist military movements may be found in U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Cambodia: May 1970 —a Staff Report* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1970), pp. 1–6.

11. For a report of the Special Action Group decision process on the Cambodian intervention, which completely bypassed the National Security Council and its accumulated expertise, see Robert Semple, Jr.'s, article in the *New York Times,* 10 May 1970.

April 23 that the United States had no intentions of committing ground troops in Cambodia.[12]

The President couched his decision to intervene directly on the ground in Cambodia exclusively in terms of protecting American forces remaining in Vietnam by destroying the Vietnamese communist supply depots along the Cambodian border. Although the President mentioned no American obligation to support the Lon Nol government, he did acknowledge that one of the desired effects of the U.S./ARVN invasion would be to force Vietnamese communist personnel westward, further into Cambodia.[13] Prince Sihanouk replied to the President's address from Peking, arguing that since U.S. intervention was driving Vietnamese communist forces westward, the United States would follow its initial foray with a new commitment to the Lon Nol regime, which had provided the Americans with an intervention opportunity in exchange for a promise to help Phnom Penh survive. Thus, the United States had broadened the Indochina war to include Cambodia.[14]

The Nixon administration's official explanation for its "limited incursion" into Cambodia was based on *military* criteria drawn from military intelligence. Administration officials contended that the eastern and southern Cambodian border areas were those from which the North Vietnamese "had long supplied and directed their main efforts against South Vietnam." The purpose of the invasion, then, was "to prevent the development of increased threats to American troops in Vietnam and the success of the Vietnamization program that could result from an expanded contiguous North Vietnamese base area in Cambodia."[15] The decision to use American troops for the incursion, despite its apparent violation of the Nixon Doctrine, may well have been reached through a process of eliminating alternative courses of action until the one with the greatest probability of success remained. Thus, reliance upon Cambodian military efforts was excluded for this goal because the United States military perceived it as too small and untrained either to absorb large-scale military aid or to effectively remove the communists from the border area. Permitting ARVN to go it alone against the sanctuaries was probably also rejected on the grounds of full military effectiveness. This left the alternative of a joint U.S./ARVN operation.[16]

U.S. military officials argued that the incursion was not an invasion be-

12. Gordon and Young, "The Khmer Republic: That Was the Cambodia That Was," p. 35.

13. The text of the President's address of 30 April 1970 may be found in Gettleman et al., *Conflict in Indochina.*

14. Sihanouk, reply, 2 May 1970, ibid.

15. Rogers, *United States Foreign Policy, 1969–1970,* p. 53.

16. For an interesting discussion of the closure-of-alternatives approach to policy-making, see Peter A. Wissel, "A Lexicographic Approach to Foreign Policy Decision-Making," paper presented to the 67th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Sept. 1971.

cause it was limited in time and confined in territory. They also insisted that the border areas were inhabited solely by VPA and Viet Cong forces, civilian inhabitants having either fled or been forced out by the communists.[17] This last point proved false, however, as the military intervention precipitated a large flow of refugees to Cambodia's towns and cities, thus increasing Phnom Penh's administrative burden while simultaneously disrupting agricultural production and supply on which the ability to ease that burden depended.

The premises of American involvement in Cambodia appeared to expand between April and June 1970, during the course of the intervention. Although in the month of April presidential statements emphasized solely the danger to Vietnamization from communist sanctuaries in Cambodia, by the time U.S. troops returned to Vietnam at the end of June, the President had shifted his premises. He asserted that ten days prior to the American intervention of April 30, North Vietnamese troops had cut all major roads south and east of Phnom Penh and appeared to be surrounding the capital, totally cutting off the eastern section of the country and rendering it a large North Vietnamese sanctuary both for its war in South Vietnam and its goal of overthrowing the Lon Nol government. Nixon's statement that "the communists' move against the Cambodian Government preceded the U.S. action against the base areas" gave credibility to a new interpretation of the purpose of the intervention: to save the Lon Nol regime.[18]

Additional reports buttress this interpretation of U.S. action. One close observer of the Cambodian scene stated that American officials did not seriously consider the intervention until after the Vietnamese communists began successful assaults on Cambodian provincial centers on April 22.[19] This information fits in with Secretary Rogers' testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 20, denying any American intention to send ground forces into Cambodia. According to another student of U.S. foreign policy, a select State Department briefing soon after U.S. troops were withdrawn from Cambodia acknowledged that one of the purposes of the intervention was to save Lon Nol's government from military defeat at the hands of Vietnamese communists.[20] Thus, by late August 1970 Secretary of Defense Laird openly stated that the United States was committed to the maintenance of a neutral government in Cambodia.[21] And in testimony be-

17. U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Cambodia: May 1970—a Staff Report*, p. 6.

18. The text of President Nixon's address of 30 June 1970 may be found in Rogers, *United States Foreign Policy, 1969–1970*, pp. 444–45.

19. J. L. S. Girling, "Crisis and Conflict in Cambodia," p. 361.

20. I. F. Stone, "Only the Bums Can Save the Country Now," in Gettleman et al., *Conflict in Indochina*, p. 439.

21. Cited in Gordon and Young, "The Khmer Republic: That Was the Cambodia That Was," p. 35.

fore the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 14, 1972, Secretary Rogers averred: "One of the reasons we have increased the request for Cambodian assistance is that we are anxious to see that the government in Cambodia survives."[22]

This meant, in effect, that the United States had widened the Vietnam war by choosing to elevate military criteria for intervention to obtain an advantage on the South Vietnamese battlefield over the cost of a predictable North Vietnamese response that would turn eastern Cambodia, southern Laos, and South Vietnam into a unified theater of operations. Although the invasion was undoubtedly temporarily successful from a military point of view (the Vietnamese communists reportedly lost enough weapons and other supplies to outfit some 110 battalions!)[23] it provided the North Vietnamese with a rationale to launch and provide for an indigenous "liberation movement" for Cambodia, while simultaneously letting themselves off the hook as the *only* outside aggressor in the country. American air strikes, even in areas known to contain Cambodian villages, further served to strengthen a Hanoi-backed "liberation" appeal.[24]

The President painted the best possible complexion on the face of the Cambodian war by citing the effect on North Vietnam of being forced to spread its forces across three countries, thus indirectly aiding the Vietnamization strategy. (The President estimated that some 140,000 communist troops were tied down in Laos and Cambodia.)[25] Between April and December 1970 the President—through the emergency provisions of the Foreign Assistance and Appropriations Acts—allocated some $109 million to Cambodia without any congressional authorization.[26] Appearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in December 1970, Secretary Rogers testified that the administration was providing aid to the new Cambodian government only because that government's political and military viability contributed directly to American objectives in Vietnam, without entailing the involvement of any U.S. ground forces. The buildup of the Cambodian army with Thai, South Vietnamese, and American aid, according to Rogers, benefited the Republic of Vietnam by forcing the communists to disperse their forces and hence reduce their military pressure on Regions III and IV. Aid to Cambodia, then, was another manifestation of the Nixon Doctrine: "We are not doing it to help the Cambodians. We are doing it to

22. Quoted in the *Washington Post,* 8 May 1972.
23. Pike, "Cambodia's War," p. 23.
24. *New York Times,* 24 May 1970.
25. Richard M. Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1970's: A Report to the Congress* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Feb. 1971), pp. 83–84. This is a larger number than that estimated for those in South Vietnam.
26. U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Supplemental Foreign Assistance Authorization, 1970 Hearings* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 10–11 Dec. 1970), p. 33.

help our own policy of Vietnamization, and in this case, looking at it from the standpoint of the Cambodians, they are in a sense taking over the fighting that we were previously doing.[27]

The administration's tactic, then, was to justify a widening of the Vietnam war into Cambodia in terms of its promise to disengage U.S. fighting forces without losing the war militarily. If the replacement of American by Indochinese troops was considered the prime means of achieving Vietnamization, then drawing Cambodia into the war was not an unfortunate side effect, but a necessary component of that policy so long as the North Vietnamese relied on Cambodian base and transit areas. In a December 1970 statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Secretary Laird pointed up the effectiveness of the Cambodian front by noting that the diversion of North Vietnamese troops into Cambodia was followed by a decline in monthly U.S. casualties in Military Region III from 134 in April to 47 in October.[28]

American officials were not unaware of the costs of their policy to Cambodia, however; Secretary Rogers, for example, allowed that the Vietnamese communists had consolidated their control over northeastern Cambodia *after* the U.S./ARVN intervention and had established a major supply and base location where Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam came together. Thus, the northeastern part of the country had virtually been annexed by the Vietnamese communists at the end of 1970. Similarly, the economic costs of the war to Cambodia were considerable: earnings from rubber, rice, and tourism disappeared; and internal trade and transportation were constantly disrupted by communist forces. American aid was required, then, to sustain the Phnom Penh government.[29] In effect, the United States had acquired a new economic dependent in exchange for a military ally. Indicative of this was the President's request for an appropriation of $284 million to aid Cambodia at the end of 1970—a sum almost as large as the total amount of U.S. assistance to that country for the 1955–65 decade before Sihanouk dispensed with American assistance.

The provision of economic assistance and military matériel to Cambodia was supplemented by a decision early in the war to provide close air support —bombing, strafing, and rocket attacks—for Cambodian troops engaged in combat anywhere in the country. U.S. military sources specifically mentioned the area around Phnom Penh where any serious enemy attack could bring down the government.[30] Thus, the United States initiated the same kind of air war in Cambodia that it had been conducting for some time in both Laos and South Vietnam. And as in Vietnam, much of the popular

27. Ibid., pp. 5, 69.
28. *U.S. Department of State Bulletin,* 63, no. 1642 (14 Dec. 1970): 754.
29. U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Supplemental Foreign Assistance . . . 1970, Hearings,* p. 5.
30. *New York Times,* 28 June 1970.

animosity toward the United States and fear of its actions grew out of indiscriminate bombing and strafing. According to one North Vietnamese guerrilla in Cambodia: "There are four purposes of a B-52 raid: to prepare the way for a military advance, to strike a liberated area that cannot be reached on the ground, to drive the people out of an area, or to drive the people into the cities where they can be controlled. It is the ordinary people who suffer from the B-52 attacks, not the soldiers of the revolution."[31]

As seasoned North Vietnamese forces repeatedly outmaneuvered the fledgling Phnom Penh army, American air power came to be increasingly employed as an equalizer. During Cambodian operations to clear Route 4 to the port city of Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) in early 1971, for example, Secretary Rogers acknowledged and clarified the variegated missions of the Air Force in Cambodia: "The principal use of the Air Force," he stated, "will be near the sanctuary areas, *but there is no limit on it. . . . [The President] intends to use airpower as he sees fit against enemy forces,* against enemy supplies, against enemy communications, and to prevent the enemy from reestablishing those base areas" (emphasis added).[32] At the end of 1971 it was estimated that the cost of American bombing would rise to $1 billion, more than the total prewar national income of Cambodia. The number of air sorties climbed from an official 9,226 in 1970 to some 16,437 in 1971, with 1972 air attacks projected even higher. Heavy dependence on U.S. Air Force strikes to support Phnom Penh in 1973 led to the astronomical figure of some 35,500 sorties between the Vietnam cease-fire (January 28) and August 11.[33]

By late 1970, an evolving administration view on Cambodia had crystallized which held that (a) an inescapable relationship obtained between what happened on the Cambodian battlefield and the ultimate success of Vietnamization; (b) the security of American forces and their withdrawal from South Vietnam required the maintenance of a friendly, noncommunist government in Phnom Penh; and (c) the enemy must be prevented from gaining access to Cambodian seaports and the 600-mile-long Cambodian–South Vietnamese frontier.

The administration was cognizant, however, of significant opposition in Congress to any specific U.S. commitment to the protection of the Lon Nol regime in Phnom Penh, as well as of congressional skepticism which foresaw that once military aid began it would be followed first by advisers and then by U.S. ground forces. In hopes of assuaging these apprehensions, Sec-

31. Richard Dudman, *Forty Days with the Enemy,* p. 111.

32. *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* 64, no. 1651 (15 Feb. 1971): 189.

33. Cited in J. L. S. Girling, "Nixon's 'Algeria'—Doctrine and Disengagement in Indochina," p. 541; and U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia: January 1972—a Staff Report* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 8 May 1972), p. 34. Pentagon statistics in the *Lexington* (Kentucky) *Herald,* 15 Aug. 1973.

retary Rogers promised the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that U.S. military aid would be "unsophisticated" so that American advisers would be unnecessary.[34] Nonetheless, the Cooper-Church amendment to the 1971 authorization of $255 million for operations in Cambodia specifically forbade the President to employ "ground combat forces and advisers."

With typical bureaucratic ingenuity, however, the Defense Department introduced a small number of advisers into Cambodia under the guise of Military Equipment Delivery Teams (MEDT). By February 1971 some sixteen teams were permanently stationed in Phnom Penh and another fifty were shuttling between the Cambodian capital and Saigon. A total of sixty six officers were officially engaged at any given time in "logistics" for the Cambodian army. The State Department conceded that the MEDT's also provided "minimal basic training" in the use of unsophisticated weapons; in order to assess the use of the equipment, MEDT members sometimes accompanied Cambodian units into the field. By spring 1972 the MEDT's rose to 115 U.S. personnel.[35]

The gradual buildup of MEDT's in Phnom Penh led to reports of a civilian-military conflict within the U.S. embassy over the U.S. military role in Cambodia. The civilian position, ascribed to Jonathan Ladd, chief political counselor, argued for a minimal program designed to train Cambodian special forces to harass communist base areas but not to become bogged down in large-scale unit operations. The military head of the MEDT program, Brigadier General Theodore C. Mataxis, favored full American backing for Cambodian assaults on communist sanctuaries and supply lines. In one sense the Mataxis approach fitted in best with the administration's Vietnamization strategy of forcing the communists to keep their troops dispersed and engaged outside of Vietnam. Ladd's position, however, coincided with the spirit of congressional skepticism over further American involvement in the Cambodian war and the desire to limit the hostilities if possible. Mataxis' reported desire to step up Cambodian military operations coincided with the diminution of American forces in South Vietnam and may have been a response to pressures from U.S. commissioned officers to provide some new war-zone activity in order to maintain the rapid career momentum that had been generated in the course of the Vietnam war.[36]

Reports circulated in Washington during the autumn of 1971 of a Joint Chiefs of Staff estimate that a military solution in Cambodia would require more than $500 million by 1977 and that Cambodian troops would have to jump from 185,000 in 1971 to some 300,000 by 1977, with a paramilitary force of perhaps another 500,000 to back up the regulars. As an initial step

34. *New York Times*, 13 Dec. 1970.
35. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 March 1971, p. 26; and *Washington Post*, 8 May 1972.
36. *Newsweek*, 18 Oct. 1971, p. 49.

toward implementing this solution, the Joint Chiefs considered the $211 million military-assistance portion of the administration's total request for 1972 of $351 million to be too small. They had devised plans for shifting $52 million from other sources to the military-aid program, intended to boost the regular Cambodian army to 220,000 men by the end of 1972. Secretary Laird neither confirmed nor denied the JCS report and did not alter the original $351 million request for all forms of assistance to Cambodia. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee cut that request by $100 million, however, placing itself in clear opposition to the reported JCS program of building up the Cambodian armed forces.[37] In effect, the Foreign Relations Committee foresaw and rejected the Nixon administration's desire for a long-term commitment to Cambodia as a way of protecting and extending the American commitment to Vietnam. If the JCS plan had been accepted, almost half the adult males of Cambodia would be conscripted by 1977![38] The Khmer economy would be totally disrupted, and the country would become another complete American dependency.

Despite congressional strictures, however, the Pentagon still managed to circumvent the ceiling on U.S. advisers in Cambodia by employing Thai and South Korean officers as third-country nationals, paid out of MEDT funds. Nevertheless, during 1972, it became increasingly clear to both U.S. civilian and military officials that the Phnom Penh government lacked the administrative capacity to absorb large amounts of American aid. Much of what had been provided in the preceding two years had found its way to the black market or even into the hands of Vietnamese communist purchase officers. Washington indirectly acknowledged this situation by reducing the economic-assistance portion of the fiscal-1972 Cambodian aid program from an authorized $110 million to an actual $37 million.[39]

The Thais themselves blew hot and cold on the Cambodian war. They viewed the Vietnamese communist take-over of the Cambodian side of their southern border with considerable concern. Talk of a mutual defense pact with Phnom Penh was originally scotched in July 1971, when it appeared that North Vietnamese troops were purposely avoiding any attempt to antagonize Thailand and refraining from the construction of bases too near the Thai border.[40] By the end of 1971, however, Thai leaders like General Praphat Charusathian, deputy chairman of the National Executive Council, detected a joint effort by Thailand's own communists to coordinate attacks in both the north and south with large-scale communist offensives across the borders in Laos and Cambodia. General Praphat perceived "the most critical

37. *Washington Post,* 14 Oct. 1971; and *New York Times,* 17 Oct. 1971.
38. Michael Malloy, "A Limited Bulwark," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 30 Oct. 1971.
39. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 6 Nov. 1971, p. 18, and 30 Sept. 1972, p. 34.
40. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 10 July 1971.

situation" to be along the Cambodian frontier and acknowledged that his government had extended permission to the Cambodians to overfly Thai territory in order to supply their forces in Khao Pra Vihorn.[41]

Within three weeks, Thailand and the Khmer Republic had concluded a security agreement along the lines of the Thai-Malaysia pact. The operative parts of the agreement provided for joint border patrols and included a "hot pursuit" clause which authorized troops and police forces of the two countries to pursue communist forces into each other's territory up to a specified distance.[42] Since there were virtually no Cambodian forces on the Cambodian side of the border (the area being completely dominated by the Vietnamese communists), the pact had the effect of providing Thailand with a legitimate excuse for keeping the North Vietnamese at a distance in the south and away from elements of the Thai communist party. In exchange, the Thais agreed to continue their training program for Cambodian troops in Thailand. The Thai-Cambodian pact, then, should be viewed more as a means of protecting the integrity of Thailand's borders against a North Vietnamese spillover from Cambodia than as any major new source of support for Cambodia itself. The pact was a sign of the inability of the Khmer Republic's mandate to extend much beyond the major cities and periodically their riverine and highway supply routes.

Thailand's concern for its southeastern border areas coincided with ARVN military setbacks in late 1971 and early 1972 in the Krek, Chup, and Suong areas of eastern Cambodia. After a successful ARVN drive through the Chup rubber plantation in November 1971, a concentrated North Vietnamese counterattack plus a repeated buildup of communist troops west of Saigon in January 1972 led to a precipitate South Vietnamese withdrawal from eastern Cambodia, apparently without even notifying Cambodian forces which were ensconced in backup positions near Krek. The ARVN exit was followed by a comparable Khmer military withdrawal, leaving the entire eastern region of the country to North Vietnamese occupation for the first time since the April 1970 U.S./ARVN intervention.[43] Half-hearted attempts by outnumbered Phnom Penh forces and some ARVN troops to oust the North Vietnamese during 1972 were unsuccessful.

In a tactic that illustrates the interconnectedness among the Indochinese battlefields, as the military situation turned critical in Cambodia and Laos, leaving the Ho Chi Minh Trail completely open for the rapid movement of enemy supplies into both South Vietnam and Cambodia, President Nixon resorted to the one major military tool left to him. U.S. fighter-bombers went into North Vietnam in the heaviest assaults since 1968 to destroy supplies

41. *Bangkok Post*, 29 Dec. 1971.
42. *Nation* (Bangkok), 3 Jan. 1972.
43. A UPI report on the details of the ARVN and Cambodian military withdrawals may be found in the *Lexington* (Kentucky) *Herald*, 13 Jan. 1972.

before they could be trucked down the Trail and to knock out the antiaircraft installations and MIG airfields that hampered the freedom of American planes to interdict the supply network.[44]

Increased American air activity, then, was an important component of Vietnamization. It signified a change in the type and locations of the American commitment to a noncommunist South Vietnam but *no change* in the basic commitment per se. One observer aptly typed the strategy as one of "escalating upstream while you deescalate downstream."[45] That is, U.S. involvement in Laos and Cambodia was growing through increased matériel and air support while direct involvement in Vietnam declined. The aim was to create a screen upstream from South Vietnam to protect Saigon—the price being paid by Laos and Cambodia.

To the Nixon administration, then, the importance of a noncommunist Cambodia was a function of its geographical position astride the Ho Chi Minh Trail and as a sanctuary area for North Vietnamese, where they could stockpile supplies for their attacks on Saigon and the Mekong Delta region. A *successful withdrawal* of American troops from South Vietnam (that is, a withdrawal that would not be followed by a communist takeover of at least the countryside) depended on a continued ARVN ground and U.S. air strategy designed to keep eastern Cambodia free of extensive Vietnamese communist buildups.

The rationale for the foregoing strategy may be better understood if we read Nixon's own 1971 description of the character of the American confrontation with communist forces. His basic ideas, to judge from this statement, do not appear to have changed much since his vice-presidential years during the height of the Cold War:

> I have been to Asia a number of times, and I think what would happen is that if after all of this sacrifice and all of this effort, the United States, right at the time that we are winding down the war and bringing our men home, at a time when the South Vietnamese are achieving the capability of hacking it, . . . if the United States now were to throw in the towel and come home and the Communists took over South Vietnam, then all over Southeast Asia, all over the Pacific, in the Mideast, in Europe, in the world, the United States would suffer a blow . . . because we are the great peacekeeping nation in the world today because of our power. . . .
>
> If the war in Vietnam is ended in a way that is considered to be an American defeat or a reward for those who engage in aggression, . . . then they will do it again.[46]

44. *New York Times,* 2 Jan. 1972.
45. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 11 Dec. 1971, p. 25.
46. President Nixon's news conference with Howard K. Smith, 22 March 1971, *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* 64, no. 1959 (12 April 1971): 501–3.

The limited evidence presented in this chapter suggests considerable perceptual and policy congruence between the Office of the President and top-level U.S. military leadership regarding the war in Cambodia in 1971 and 1972. Both seemed to consider the maintenance of a noncommunist Cambodia essential for legitimating U.S. forays against communist supply routes into Vietnam. This conception, however, was countered by considerable congressional malaise with the whole Indochina war. Congress had inhibited administration freedom of action in the region by placing stringent monetary ceilings on aid to Cambodia and by specifically prohibiting by statute any reintroduction of American ground forces into Cambodia regardless of the shifting military fortunes of communist and anticommunist forces in the region. To implement his strategy in the face of congressional controls, the President relied increasingly on air power in Cambodia and encouraged third-country support for the Phnom Penh government while continuing to withdraw military personnel from South Vietnam.

Through 1972 and despite the Vietnam peace terms in January 1973, it seemed that the Nixon administration was committed to the survival of Lon Nol's Phnom Penh government. Its ability to insure that survival, however, given congressional fiscal reticence and a rapidly dwindling U.S. force structure, remained problematical. The cutoff of U.S. bombing, at congressional insistence, on August 15, 1973, called the whole Indochina strategy of Nixon into question so far as it deemed it essential to maintain a noncommunist Cambodia if the Saigon government was to survive.

Chapter VIII. The future of Cambodia: Congruence and incongruence in foreign views

Up to this point, our study has delineated the separate positions of the major actors[1] toward the Cambodian war on the basis of official governmental statements and mass-media output. It is worth repeating an earlier caveat that public positions may mask as much as they reveal; they often hide the actual bargaining and decisional processes among diverse organizational and individual viewpoints. In dealing with U.S. data, it was possible to discern some intragovernmental differences through an analysis of the open, public disagreements between Congress and the Executive, and even to infer some differences within the Executive Branch between the Pentagon and the Department of State. Although the data on the other actors did not lend themselves as well to analyses of intragovernmental differences, an effort was made to discover possible conflicting viewpoints between the Sihanoukists and Khmer Rouge and those in Peking who preferred a balkanized outcome in Indochina to all-out support for a Vietminh victory. Only in the DRV's case was it difficult to distinguish public differences over the nature and preferred outcomes of the Cambodian war. However, as explained below in this chapter, Hanoi did display some indecision in late 1972 over whether and how the war in Cambodia should be prosecuted in the event that a Vietnam cease-fire occurred. Although it was hard to associate specific individuals with what was probably a high-level policy debate in Hanoi, the outlines of the differences themselves could be discerned.

It is the premise of this study that prospects for a Cambodian settlement improve as the perceptions of the nature of the war, the stakes for each actor, and preferred outcomes move together. The obverse, of course, equally applies: differing perceptions of the nature of the war, the stakes, and preferred outcomes can indefinitely prolong the agony. Amron Katz illustrates this point nicely when he explains the difficulty of communicating the concepts "winning" and "losing" between adversaries in a liberation war which has no military front line:

> Consider—as a thought exercise—what kind of briefings Ho Chi Minh was getting on the course of the war and compare these with the briefings that were given Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, and President Johnson. . . . It could have been simultaneously true that Ho's graphs, if he used any, were going up while ours were going up. If we want to persuade the leaders of North Vietnam that they are "losing"

1. China, the Vietnamese communists, Sihanouk's RGNUC, the Khmer Republic of Lon Nol, and the United States and its Saigon ally.

> the war, we had better (1) find out what measures, indicators, or graphs they are using, and (2) operate in such a way as to make those graphs go down.[2]

Even Katz's insight may be inadequate, however, if it is not only the adversaries' measurements which differ but also their whole concept of what the conflict is about and hence their differential willingness to see it through, at varying cost levels. In a protracted limited conflict, internal political unity behind a single security policy spells the difference between victory and defeat more than the weapons technology or total economic capacity of the belligerents, for neither of the latter is employed to its fullest.

Insofar as the Vietnamese communists perceived the Cambodian venture as analogous to their "liberation war" in Vietnam, the first question they would have confronted is whether the conditions which made for a viable insurgency in Vietnam also held in Cambodia. It is on the prospects for such an insurgency that the choices made by both the RGNUC and North Vietnamese of a strategy for the long-run future in Cambodia depended, and, by projection, in all of Indochina.

Social scientists dealing with cross-national studies of internal violence in underdeveloped regions have associated it with land-tenure practices. They have found that gross inequality of land ownership relates to internal violence.[3] Such inequality prevailed in Vietnam in the 1960's; interviews with prisoners of war and defectors presented a picture of class war in which those with means fled to the towns and cities, leaving the poor in the countryside to come under the control of the NFLSV. Few of those who chose to join the NFLSV, according to the interviewers, believed they could acquire land under the South Vietnamese government.[4] Eighty percent of the farming population in the Mekong Delta, for example, consisted of tenants who paid 40 to 60 percent of their crop in rent *before* taxes. The NFLSV addressed itself specifically to this grievance, initially by reducing the rent in areas under its control and subsequently through the redistribution of land from absentee and local rich peasants (there were few such) to tenant farmers. The NFLSV was viewed, then, by many of the peasants more as a social-reform movement restoring land to the tiller than as an incipient countergovernment to Saigon bent ultimately on revolutionary rural collectivization. If, indeed, this aspect of the Vietminh agricultural development in the North was intended by the Viet Cong for the South, it was apparently not advertised in any part of its propaganda. On the contrary, middle and

2. Amron H. Katz, "An Approach to Future Wars of National Liberation," pp. 12–13.

3. Zagoria, "The Ecology of Peasant Communism in India" and Davis B. Bobrow, "Liberation Wars, National Environments, and American Decision-Making," in Tang Tsou, *China In Crisis,* II, 317–18.

4. Donnell, Pauker, and Zasloff, *Viet Cong Motivation and Morale in 1964,* p. 28.

even some "rich" peasants rallied to the NFLSV when President Diem's strategic-hamlet program led to the destruction of homes and ancestral villages.[5]

The question arises, then, whether the rural social and economic pattern in Cambodia provided comparable opportunities for a communist insurgency, given Khmer land-tenure practices? The answer seems to be no. Close students of Cambodia have observed that the country has been remarkably free of tenancy—some 95 percent of Khmer peasants were estimated as owning their own land in the 1960's in a country in which 80 percent of the land surface is cultivable. Indebtedness is described as "moderate"; and with a population of only seven million, overpopulation appears to be no problem.[6] The rural social milieu, then, was not comparable to that in South Vietnam. And indeed, the Cambodian communist party (the Khmer Rouge) was not a particularly formidable organization before Sihanouk was deposed in March 1970. Robert Scalapino estimated its strength in 1968 at only some 2,000, primarily of intellectual and urban origin, with little peasant or military representation.[7]

Nevertheless, certain characteristics of the Cambodian political situation seemed to fit elements of both the Chinese and Vietminh revolutionary paradigms. Cambodia's economic development level was low, and the economy was decentralized; the government maintained only precarious control beyond the major cities, for its military arm was underdeveloped. There was, then, a kind of political vacuum in the countryside, into which an organized political opposition to Phnom Penh could move, despite the relative absence of deep-seated social malaise comparable to that prevailing in South Vietnam which might serve as a catalyst for revolution.

As Peter Van Ness has pointed out, a successful revolutionary ideology analyzes and explains to a target country's population the unjust character of existing conditions and then points to an enemy as the specific source of the injustice. The ideology, then, analyzes the nature of the enemy's viciousness (to underscore the necessity for its overthrow) and the source of its weakness (to expose its vulnerability to revolution). Finally, the ideology proposes an alternative to the status quo in the form of a revolutionary movement/organization. In exchange for personal allegiance, the movement promises to provide tangible improvements in the social situation once it obtains power.[8] Furthermore, according to the same paradigm, the revolutionary party/movement establishes a peasant-based army which is primarily

5. Mark Selden, "Revolution and Third World Development," in Miller and Aya, *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World,* pp. 224–27.

6. William E. Willmott, "Cambodian Neutrality," in Gettleman et al., *Conflict in Indochina,* p. 245; and Michael Leifer, *Cambodia: The Search for Security,* p. 4.

7. Robert A. Scalapino, "Communism in Asia: Toward a Comparative Analysis," in Scalapino, *The Communist Revolution in Asia,* pp. 12, 36.

8. Peter Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy,* pp. 21–22.

self-supporting and located in rural-base safe havens.[9] The stages of the revolutionary movement, then, evolve thus: (a) the initial emergence of an intellectual leadership core → (b) the broadening of the party base, particularly in the countryside → (c) the presentation of a military and political challenge to the incumbent regime → (d) the prosecution of *people's war*.[10]

The degree to which the Cambodian insurgency corresponds to the preceding ideological and organizational criteria of revolution will demonstrate how closely it fits the successful Vietminh and Chinese communist experiences. It has already been shown that Cambodian land-tenure practices did not provide a favorable milieu for radical agrarian politics. Therefore, peasant allegiance to a revolutionary movement would have to be obtained on grounds other than economic self-interest. One such appeal, which the Vietminh, Chinese, and the FUNK all stressed, was the legitimacy of the political lineage of the revolutionary movement stemming from Prince Sihanouk. Since there were no pronounced economic and social grievances on the part of the Cambodian rural population, the mentors of revolution stressed the political restoration of Prince Sihanouk and his "socialist" government-in-exile as the goal of their activities.

North Vietnam's emphasis on the necessity of *people's war* for Cambodia permitted the Vietminh to subordinate their efforts on the Cambodian battlefield to their activities in South Vietnam. That is, only enough military support was provided for the CPLAF to ensure its control of the safe havens and the protection of the sanctuary areas along the Vietnam border. Offensive forays into other parts of Cambodia, designed to draw South Vietnamese forces away from their own countryside, were conducted primarily by regular units of the VPA until late in 1972.

Under the guidance of Vietminh cadres, *dan van* ('action among the people') was carried on in "liberated areas." Its purpose, according to Douglas Pike, was to establish an internal control system which would permit exogenous Vietminh forces to avoid monitoring village activities, except periodically. On a day-to-day basis village affairs would be led by indigenous CPLAF units. Thus, the revolution would be seen by the population as primarily an internal Cambodian event rather than as an extension of the Vietnam war. This goal apparently had not been achieved, however, within the first twelve months of the Cambodian war, as VPA troops still dominated village life.[11] By 1972, however, the Phnom Penh forces' retreat to Cambodia's urban centers, combined with a greatly reduced ARVN presence, permitted the FUNK and CPLAF to consolidate their control over much of the countryside, particularly in the north and west. Such uncon-

9. Arthur Huck, *The Security of China,* p. 50.
10. Scalapino, pp. 19–24.
11. Douglas Pike, "Cambodia's War," pp. 33–34; and Richard Dudman, *Forty Days with the Enemy.*

tested control probably led to the erection of an indigenous communist infrastructure in Cambodia for the first time since the 1954 Geneva Conference forced the Vietminh out of the country.

Vietminh and CPLAF forces engaged in a *binh van* effort ('action among the enemy') to proselytize Phnom Penh governmental and military personnel through propaganda media to defect to the FUNK. Numerous Front radio broadcasts welcomed alleged defectors, thus attempting to create the impression that the trend of events was toward the revolution.[12]

A cursory comparison of the behavior of the North Vietnamese in Cambodia with their operations in Laos points up some of the unique difficulties Hanoi encountered in the former.[13] Most supplies for both Vietminh-directed insurgencies came from China via Hanoi as a distribution center. Thus, North Vietnam controlled the amount and kinds of weapons used by the Pathet Lao and the CPLAF. Cadre behavior toward the general civilian population in both countries appears to have been quite respectful. Few people were mistreated; and the local populace was promptly reimbursed for goods and services. However, while North Vietnamese forces generally kept clear of Laotian villages, leaving their control to the Pathet Lao, in Cambodia the FUNK did not develop as strong an internal organization until perhaps late 1972. Thus, North Vietnamese troops were apparently billeted in the villages, demonstrating every day that Cambodia was involved in an *international* war rather than a domestic insurgency.[14]

Although Laotian and North Vietnamese military units operated separately, Vietminh cadres were assigned to the Laotian units in an advisory capacity as low as the company level and appear to have been the real decisionmakers. Front troops in Cambodia, by contrast, seem to have operated more independently of the North Vietnamese, though still dependent upon them for supplies. Reports periodically filtering out to noncommunist media through defectors to Phnom Penh and prisoners of war told of ethnic friction between low-level North Vietnamese and Cambodian personnel, although this friction was probably controlled more effectively than comparable antagonisms between ARVN and Phnom Penh forces. Finally, VPA troops in Laos invariably wore Pathet Lao uniforms and appeared much more circumspect about their activities than in Cambodia, where they were found in regular North Vietnamese military attire.

In sum, it appeared at least until late 1972 that the Cambodian Liberation

12. Ibid., p. 36. Typical was the Voice of the FUNK broadcast in Cambodian on 18 Nov. 1972, predicting future attacks on Phnom Penh and urging the inhabitants to flee to the "liberated areas." The rate of these broadcasts accelerated in 1973 as the fighting moved closer to Phnom Penh.

13. The Laotian data for these paragraphs are drawn from Langer and Zasloff, *North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao,* pp. 121, 122, 125, 151, 152, 167, 169.

14. Interviews with U.S. Department of State officials recently stationed in Cambodia, May 1972.

Front, in contrast to its South Vietnamese counterpart, consisted essentially of a foreign (Vietnamese communist) derived and supported political and military organization which recruited and converted as many Cambodians as possible, but whose efforts apparently lacked the popular appeal necessary to permit it to retreat into the background at the village level. While appealing to Prince Sihanouk's support as a symbol of its political legitimacy, the movement undermined its erstwhile Cambodian façade by the very visible operations of regular North Vietnamese forces, which subordinated any separate Cambodian interests to their own more salient goal of victory in South Vietnam. The Cambodian movement, then, appeared to violate the classical Chinese and Vietminh revolutionary models. Its leadership core was small and not well connected with the rural society; it had not particularly broadened its base, because of heavy reliance on the North Vietnamese for military action. It presented a political and military challenge to the Phnom Penh regime, but that challenge was conducted less through the medium of *people's war* than by regular units of Vietnamese communist forces. The designated enemy was American imperialism and its Phnom Penh and Saigon lackeys. However, any inherent justice in this appeal was weakened by the fact that the "revolutionary forces" themselves were equally composed of external actors.

The absence of a propitious domestic social setting for revolution may be partially compensated for by the ratio of the strength and commitment of external revolutionary forces to those same qualities in the incumbent regime and its backers. Of course, any estimation of such a ratio would have to be subjective. It would depend in large part upon two factors which this study has attempted to assess: (a) the degree of congruence in the major actors' conceptions of the war and its importance, and (b) their suggested ways of resolving the hostilities. It has been our hypothesis that those actors who view the dimensions of the Cambodian conflict in relatively congruent terms would propose compatible solutions to the war.[15] The obverse would equally hold.

Our first task, then, is to recapitulate the actors' views, i.e., which issues about the war they themselves deemed most salient. A comparison of these issues (drawn from the preceding chapters) across national actors should provide us with a picture of the compatibility of war conceptions across allies and adversaries. An examination of the gross characteristics of the summary table (Table 8.1) reveals three particularly interesting general features.

(i) The two contending Cambodian leaderships produce both the most

15. It should be emphasized, however, that even compatible solutions might not bring an end to stalemate and continued warfare, if, for example, each side viewed military victory as vital.

Table 8.1. *Rank orderings of mass-media targets related to the Cambodian war emanating from Peking, Hanoi, Sihanouk's RGNUC, and Phnom Penh, April 1970–October 1972*

	Rank order of theme[a]			
Target theme	*Peking*	*Hanoi*	*RGNUC*	*Phnom Penh*
1. Vietnamese communist actions	—	3 (16)	3 (26)	1 (54)
2. Attitude toward the American and South Vietnamese role in Cambodia[b]	2 (10)	1 (28)	2 (55)	2 (50)
3. Racial relations between Cambodians and Vietnamese	—	—	—	3 (21)
4. The state of the Cambodian economy[b]	—	—	2 (55)	4 (14)
5. Attitude toward Sihanouk and the RGNUC	3 (5)	2 (20)	1 (70)	5 (11)
6. Relations with Peking	—	—	4 (19)	—
7. Differences within the FUNK	—	—	5 (4)	—
8. Attitude toward Cambodia within the Indochina Front	1(27)	—	—	—

[a] Numbers in parentheses represent the *N* in each category.
[b] Targets 2 and 4 are combined into one theme for the RGNUC.

variegated and most similar themes. This suggests that the Lon Nol and the FUNK organizations see the war and its actors in roughly comparable terms. Both, for example, view the American and South Vietnamese role as important; however, where the Khmer Republic stresses the paramountcy of Vietnamese communist actions for the outcome of the war, the RGNUC assigns Hanoi and the Viet Cong only a middle rank of interest. This feature is not really surprising, though, since Sihanouk and the Front publicly avoided the issue of Vietnamese communist control over the Cambodian campaign and insisted instead that the war was being conducted by Khmer revolutionaries and Sihanoukists. Symmetrically, the Phnom Penh government downplayed the importance of the Liberation Front (the RGNUC's primary media concern) in order to foster the impression that the war was solely one of Vietnamese communist aggression with no popular Cambodian support.

(ii) Of the eight broad target themes enunciated by one or more of the

four actors reviewed in Table 8.1, only two were used by all of them.[16] And an additional theme was mentioned by three of the four. The three themes common to virtually all of the actors dealt with the states or movements involved in the war: the United States, South Vietnam, the Vietnamese communists, the RGNUC, and Phnom Penh. Note that China was apparently not viewed as a belligerent. This fact lends credibility to Sihanouk's insistence as well as that of DRV and Chinese leaders (to be discussed below) that China could not solve the Indochina war bilaterally with the United States; rather the war could only be settled by those who were *directly* involved.

(iii) Neither Peking nor Hanoi took cognizance of the other's role in the Cambodian conflict. This reciprocal lack of attention may reflect the disparity between the CPR's preference for a balkanized, partially neutralized Indochina and Hanoi's aim of a united Vietnam for which Laos and Cambodia would be spheres of influence. Mutual circumspection about the other's role by China and North Vietnam may be a sign of incipient geopolitical differences between them which could surface after an American military withdrawal from Indochina.

Moving beyond the simple examination of media themes, it is necessary to compare their substantive meanings across actors to determine if each conceived comparable qualities in the theme targets. Recall that one hypothesis of this study is that agreement on the meanings of events (or themes) would facilitate a settlement process, while a lack of agreement on meaning would render any bargaining situation extremely difficult.

A cross-national comparison of target themes

All actors in the Indochina war, with the exception of Peking, publicly acknowledged some *Vietnamese communist role in Cambodia.* For Lon Nol's regime, Vietnamese communist activities—initially in eastern Cambodia to extend and protect the Ho Chi Minh Trail—came to be viewed as an unacceptable violation of sovereignty. The decision to move against these enclaves led to a change in Cambodia's international status, however, from that of nonaligned nonbelligerent to one of American and South Vietnamese ally. Phnom Penh leaders acknowledged that any settlement to the war must await the outcome of the conflict in Vietnam. Hence, Cambodia's future remained at the mercy of decisions made by the two Vietnams and the United States.

16. Only those themes will be discussed on which at least two actors took a position. Thus, the themes of racial animosity, differences within the FUNK, the Indochina Front, and relations with Peking are excluded from the substantive discussion. The United States has not been included in this rank-order presentation because governmental authoritativeness cannot be imputed on the basis of its media output.

For Sihanouk and the FUNK, considerable ambivalence toward North Vietnam's intentions for Cambodia was evident. The Prince's organization was aware of the fact that the battle in his country was being conducted primarily by North Vietnamese, who used his support to enhance the legitimacy of their occupation. He tried to balance this dependence by insisting that the Front in Peking be consulted on all major policy decisions for Cambodia and that the RGNUC operating inside Cambodia be drawn from all segments of Khmer society. However, the Prince in Peking was far removed from the Cambodian scene. He may well have perceived the DRV's ultimate intentions for Cambodia in much the same terms as his Khmer Republic adversaries; however, he appears to have been even less in a position to do anything to alter the trend other than to insist on his inclusion in any final disposition of the conflict. Sihanouk's visit to the "liberated areas" in February–March 1973 was designed to dramatize both his ostensible leadership of the insurgency and the fact that the Cambodian segment of the war would come increasingly under the direction of the Khmer Rouge, since the Americans had stopped their direct military involvement in Vietnam. RGNUC officials asserted on several occasions that VPA forces had played no significant role in Cambodia since the January 1973 Vietnam agreement in Paris and that any settlement in Cambodia must be the result exclusively of an RGNUC decision.

Hanoi's self-image with respect to the Cambodian conflict was tied into the notion of a peninsula-wide "liberation movement" which would unite the three countries behind North Vietnamese leadership to force the United States out of Indochina. References to the April 1970 Indochinese Peoples' Conference, which formalized a North Vietnamese relationship with Laotian and Cambodian fronts, abounded in DRV media. There were also reports that DRV political cadres in occupied Cambodia spent more time propagandizing the virtues of Vietnamese communism than they did promising to return the country to its "rightful leaders. Finally, such North Vietnamese military victories in Cambodia as the destruction of Phnom Penh's Chenla II operation in December 1971 were portrayed more to show the weakness of Saigon and Phnom Penh than the strength of the CPLAF, which was publicly credited with the victory by communist sources. It would appear, then, that Hanoi viewed the Cambodian front as one component of an Indochina battlefield whose importance must be subordinated to the exigencies of the total war. This interpretation of North Vietnam's order of priorities justified the apprehensions of both Cambodian contenders over the future of their country in a post-Indochina-war period.

All of the actors devoted much attention to the *American and South Vietnamese performance in Cambodia.* For Phnom Penh, dependence on U.S. matériel and Saigon's armed forces appeared the only way to fend off the Vietnamese communists. While this aid initially lifted some of the burden

from the backs of Lon Nol's fledgling army, it also led to the incorporation of the whole Cambodian countryside into the war, ultimately increasing the Cambodian army's responsibilities. Increased North Vietnamese pressures led in turn to the necessity of calling for more U.S. aid, air strikes, and ARVN forces, so that from early 1972 Phnom Penh's survival appeared to depend on a continued American and South Vietnamese commitment. The mandate of the Lon Nol government carried scarcely beyond the limits of a few urban centers.

For Sihanouk and the FUNK, Washington and Saigon were prime enemies because without their aid, Lon Nol's government would have collapsed in the face of North Vietnam's military strength. Dependence on American largesse was cited as evidence that Cambodia was becoming a second Southeast Asian colony of the United States after South Vietnam. This dependence was also used to justify the Front's own alliance with North Vietnam. Moreover, in contrast to what was seen by the RGNUC as a permanent commitment from North Vietnam to Cambodian "liberation," America's involvement in Indochina was perceived as transient and subject to overwhelming domestic and political pressures to disengage. *From the FUNK's vantage point, compromise was unnecessary, for once the United States pulled its forces out of Indochina, Lon Nol would either fall or flee.*

The American and South Vietnamese performance in Cambodia was the major target of Hanoi's attention. The DRV interpreted the extension of the war into Laos and Cambodia to be a strategic advantage for the "liberation forces" because it forced the United States and South Vietnam to disperse their troops, thus leaving prime targets in South Vietnam increasingly vulnerable. Furthermore, DRV leaders viewed the Cambodian war as a key test of Nixon's Vietnamization policy. If South Vietnamese and Khmer forces could both be consistently defeated on Cambodian soil, then clearly the United States would have no alternative to disengagement. Hanoi's major concern appears to have been over the possibility of an arrangement between Peking and Washington which might bypass North Vietnamese interests, for example, through a new partition of Indochina—a prospect appealing possibly to Peking, but certainly not to Hanoi. Insofar as North Vietnam's goal of victory in Indochina went beyond the Chinese desire for a total U.S. withdrawal from the region, the possibility existed of a diplomatic wedge being inserted between the two allies. Hanoi wished to avoid such a development if at all possible. On the other hand, as prospects for a Vietnam cease-fire brightened in late 1972, speculation developed around the possibility of a Hanoi-supported partition of Cambodia which would informally recognize Vietminh enclaves in eastern Cambodia as insurance against subsequent developments in Vietnam, while permitting the FUNK either to fight on in the remainder of the country or come to some kind of arrangement with the Phnom Penh authorities.

Peking's public view paralleled Hanoi's belief that a peninsula-wide war would accelerate both the "liberation" of Indochina and a U.S. decision to leave. In general, this position fitted into China's preference for protracted war as the best means of simultaneously defeating the United States and building strong indigenous liberation forces within the region.

Only the Phnom Penh government and the RGNUC displayed concern over *the internal state of the Cambodian economy and society* in the course of the war. For each of them, the capability of the economy to supply the central government with revenue and the urban population with food and other consumer goods was a bellwether of the political strength of the regime and hence its staying power. Phnom Penh media acknowledged Hanoi's success in cutting communication and transportation arteries into the countryside both to the deepwater port of Kompong Som and to the rice-rich region of the northwest. Cambodia has been unable to export since the end of 1970. The breakdown of its internal economic system was exacerbated by the creation of a 200,000-man salaried army, feeding an inflation which particularly hurt the urban professional, commercial, and intellectual groups who had initially supported Lon Nol. The war also produced a steady stream of refugees into the relatively safe urban centers at a time when employment opportunities had declined and prices had increased. The resultant social unrest eroded the popular base of Lon Nol's government.

Sihanouk's messages to the Khmer nation underscored the combination of inflation and new war taxation which particularly struck the urban middle classes—the most anti-Sihanouk groups prior to his deposition. Contrasting their relative prosperity under his aegis with their current financial straits, the Prince evidently hoped that any substantial defection to the FUNK from this segment of Cambodian administrative talent would go a considerable distance toward destroying the regime from within. The FUNK media's gleeful description of the corruption and decimation of the FANK officer corps in the last half of 1972 and 1973 seemed to bear out Sihanouk's prediction.

The last theme on which all actors took a position concerned *Sihanouk's activities, his government-in-exile, and the Front* which operated in his name inside Cambodia. For Phnom Penh the task was one of discrediting the Prince by depicting him as a helpless pawn of North Vietnam who had abjured his own long-term policy of nonalignment by inviting Cambodia's traditional Vietnamese enemy to colonize the country. Interestingly, Phnom Penh did not direct much of its ire at Peking, despite the fact that the CPR became the Prince's prime backer. Hopeful perhaps that China might be instrumental in bringing about a settlement to the Cambodian war short of Vietminh occupation, Phnom Penh leaders appeared careful not to antagonize Peking unnecessarily.

Prince Sihanouk manifested considerable sensitivity to being called a

figurehead. He attempted to assert his independence from Hanoi by frequent meetings with representatives of the Cambodian resident members of the RGNUC and through publicity for its organizational apparatus in the "liberated areas" as well as a personal visit to these areas in March 1973. The Prince acknowledged the existence of different war priorities between Hanoi and his Front and the fact that the Vietnamese communists were not particularly generous in supplying Cambodian liberation forces with the most up-to-date military equipment. These forces, through 1972, appeared to be relegated to a more static defensive enclave role in the hostilities, leaving the bulk of the actual fighting to regular units of North Vietnam's army. CPLAF offensives in the winter and spring of 1973, however, seemed to indicate a shift of fighting responsibilities to the FUNK. The FUNK's political program seemed to tie Cambodia's future to that of a fully "liberated" Indochina, precluding any separate settlement. Yet, indicative of incipient differences between Sihanouk and the Vietminh-oriented FUNK, the Prince insisted that only he and the RGNUC should negotiate the future of Cambodia—a subtle attempt to separate Cambodia's future from Vietnam.

By Hanoi the overthrow of Sihanouk was immediately interpreted as an American-precipitated move designed to permit U.S. and ARVN forces to attack the enclaves in eastern Cambodia. Cambodian affairs were seen, then, in the context of the Vietnam war by Hanoi as much as by Washington. DRV attention to Cambodia was framed within the context of an alliance for the liberation of Indochina in which North Vietnam's dominant role in the Cambodia war was both masked and justified through repeated references to the close relations among the peoples of all three Indochinese states. Indeed, Cambodia appears to have been a testing ground for VPA military tactics which subsequently appeared in Vietnam in the spring 1972 offensive. It was also viewed as a test of Vietnamization; if ARVN could be consistently defeated in Cambodia, it could also be overcome on its home soil. Hanoi devoted little attention to Sihanouk's own goals or the FUNK's operations in Cambodia.

Peking emerged as Sihanouk's prime backer and, by implication, an alternative to Hanoi as a source of material support. China's main benefit in sponsoring both Sihanouk and the Indochina Liberation Front may be understood more in the light of the Sino-Soviet conflict than of Peking's Indochina preferences. In Chinese eyes a North Vietnamese victory would not be an unmixed blessing insofar as it would consolidate a Vietminh sphere of influence relatively invulnerable to Chinese pressures. This reservation, however, appears to be offset for Chinese leaders by the fact that the CPR preempted the mentor position for Indochina from the Soviet Union, which still maintained diplomatic relations with Phnom Penh despite the fact that its total aid to North Vietnam was more than double the Chinese contribu-

tion.[17] Peking probably also derived some general third-world benefits by serving as the prime backer of an Indochina-wide movement.

While it has not been possible to rank-order American thematic attention to the Cambodian war for the reasons specified in the first part of Chapter VII, we can still assess U.S. interpretations of the major targets which the other four national actors shared. American perceptions show that U.S. officials gave scant attention to Sihanouk and his Front. Like the Phnom Penh government, American officials saw the Cambodian war as a North Vietnamese extension of the South Vietnamese battlefield to protect their sanctuaries and discredit Vietnamization. The American self-image, at least from the viewpoint of the executive branch, appeared to be composed of two interrelated components: (a) to protect the U.S. troop withdrawal by interdicting any North Vietnamese capability in eastern Cambodia before it could be introduced into South Vietnam, and (b) to aid the survival of the Phnom Penh government in order to force the North Vietnamese to focus some of their attention away from South Vietnam. (Note the parallel between the American rationale for involvement in Cambodia with the North Vietnamese belief that the United States and Saigon would be equally required to shift forces away from Vietnam.) That is, the price of Vietnamization appeared to be a widening of the war. Cambodia, then, simply became a new battlefield for Vietnam, or, more cynically, a stalking horse.

National positions of conflict settlement

Each actor's conception of the character of the Cambodian war has been recapitulated in the first part of this chapter to determine how much overlap existed in targets of attention and substantive opinion toward those targets. At this point, we turn to an examination of alternative forms of conflict settlement suggested by the actors themselves to see (a) if they grow logically out of their conceptions of the war and (b) their degree of compatibility.

A good way to begin this analysis is by recalling a statement made by Prince Sihanouk over a decade ago, projecting the foreign-policy future of Cambodia: "We are well aware that [Cambodia's] survival as a free and sovereign nation depends entirely on preserving equilibrium and friendship with the two blocs. The day we find ourselves facing only one all-powerful bloc, the days of our independence—and perhaps even of our very existence—will be counted."[18] The notable features of this brief remark include not only Sihanouk's standard emphasis on balance among contending forces

17. *New York Times,* 13 Feb. 1972.

18. Sihanouk, speech to the Asia Society in New York, September 1961, as cited in Roger M. Smith, *Cambodia's Foreign Policy,* p. 174.

but—more important for an understanding of Cambodia's later difficulties —also the assumption of a bipolar political world. The Indochina war has demonstrated the inappropriateness of the latter assumption for the 1970's in Asia. Instead of two blocs contending for control of Cambodia or its favors, there appeared to be at least three separate alliances, any one of which may have had the ability to veto a solution: (a) the United States, Phnom Penh, and Saigon; (b) the CPR, the DRV, the Viet Cong, and elements of the FUNK; and (c) the CPR and the Sihanoukists within the RGNUC. There were in turn divisions within each alliance. Cambodia for the United States and the Republic of Vietnam was of an entirely lower priority than for the Lon Nol government. Similarly, China and the Vietnamese communists saw Cambodia within the context of different Asian goals. In the case of China, the end for which the Indochina war was being fought was an American exodus from mainland Southeast Asia. For the Vietnamese communists there is evidence of an additional goal—an Indochina-wide sphere of influence for Hanoi. This goal brought Hanoi directly into conflict with Sihanouk's Front, which would prefer to salvage as much of Cambodia's previous independence as possible. It also placed Hanoi in potential opposition to Peking, which would prefer a balkanized Indochina.

As Robert Jervis has pointed out, with so much hostility among the major actors, it was hard to generate enough trust in each side's intentions for an atmosphere conducive to fruitful negotiations to develop. Even a cooperative message from any side might be misinterpreted because of reasoning from fixed ideas on the part of the receiver. That is, the past negative behavior of the sender might predispose the receiver to impute ulterior motives to him regardless of a negotiating position's actual content. Thus, even an intensive exchange of positions might be viewed as simply a succession of ruses designed to exact concessions or prolong bargaining rather than to settle the conflict on mutually acceptable terms.[19] Some of this psychology was clearly involved in the Paris talks on the Vietnam war which began in 1968. It also rendered unlikely any attempts to negotiate the Cambodian dispute.

The general problem in any bargaining may be one of convincing adversaries to modify their aspiration levels so that the number of mutually unacceptable demands decreases over time. In effect this is a learning process during the course of which each side adjusts to the opponent's behavior and expectations. When behavior and expectations are known, adversaries can devise bargaining positions based on an estimate which is a product of the utility of a particular outcome and the subjective probability of its occurrence. When each side's varying estimates approach each other, then, a

19. Robert Jervis, "Cognitive Consistency and Cognitive Distortion," paper presented to the 66th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Los Angeles, September 1970, pp. 61–62.

negotiated solution is likely. However, if one or more sides' aspiration levels are very high, real bargaining may not occur because of unwillingness to modify negotiating postures to meet those of the other actors. Put somewhat differently, if one side's aspiration level is very high, it may choose not to bargain, even though the probability of its success is small, because the product of that partieular aspiration level and even a low probability of success may be greater than the product of any other outcome combination.[20] Thus, for example, let us assume that Hanoi strongly preferred an outcome to the war which would provide the DRV with a hegemonic military and political position within all of Indochina. The probability of realizing that aspiration in the medium-term future was low. Nevertheless, so long as the desirability of that goal carried great enough decisional weight, other alternatives might have been rejected by Hanoi despite the small likelihood of obtaining its preferred outcome. The fact that its chief adversary, the United States, was sending clear signals to North Vietnam that it was bent on military disengagement from the region probably confirmed a recalcitrant negotiating strategy in this case because it increased the probability of realizing the aspiration.

An additional general problem which had to be overcome before any negotiated solution (as distinct from tacit battlefield developments, such as a mutual winding down of military activities) could be reached eoncerns the inherent distrust between *ideological enemies* who are conditioned to perceive their adversary's behavior in the worst possible light. Although this general principle applied to the United States to some degree, it was probably particularly pronounced for Asian communist states like North Vietnam because of the combination of an ideology which forced interpretation of U.S. behavior in the worst possible sense and a strong, xenophobic nationalism suspicious of all foreign influence.[21]

There were and are, then, a number of bargaining obstacles inherent in any negotiations between the United States and its allies and North Vietnam and its backers regardless of the substance of those negotiations. Bearing these in mind, the substantive alternatives for a settlement must now be assessed both for their congruenee and for some subjective estimation of their probabilities of success based on the *policy distances* among the alternative solutions. *Policy distance* in this context refers to the ratio of congruence/incongruence among alternative proposed outcomes. A high degree of congruence among proposals implies agreement on the desirable future for Cambodia, while a high degree of incongruence correlates with disagreement.

20. E. W. Kelley, "Bargaining in Coalition Situations," in Groennings et al. *The Study of Coalition Behavior,* pp. 286–92.

21. See the cognitive-balance explanation for this attitude syndrome in Ralph K. White, *Nobody Wanted War,* pp. 104–40, 284–85, 290–97.

What part has Cambodia played in the foreign-policy and security plans of each actor in the Southeast Asian field of operations?

For *North Vietnam,* Cambodian sanctuaries were vital for the implementation of the decision to launch big-unit battles in the Mekong Delta and west of Saigon beginning in 1967–68. The sanctuaries provided supply, training, medical, and even manufacturing facilities as well as access to Military Regions II and III in South Vietnam. U.S. officials estimated that about 60 percent of the 55,000 troops infiltrated into South Vietnam in 1969 came through eastern Cambodia, whose terrain was ideally composed of heavily canopied foot trails.[22] As the importance of the Cambodian sanctuaries grew to the North Vietnamese for the prosecution of the war in South Vietnam, many Cambodian civilians were driven out of the region; and most Cambodian officials were prohibited from entering. As Douglas Pike put it in an analysis of the Cambodian war through the winter of 1971: "While the primary intention of North Vietnam might be to dig in for a fifty-year war in Vietnam, one of the consequences could well be an eventual North Vietnamese takeover of Cambodia, a sort of casual conquest by seepage."[23]

While there were some signs of growing North Vietnamese weariness over the Indochina war, there was no evidence to suggest that Hanoi was either unwilling or unable to contain any domestic discontent for the foreseeable future. Such was obviously not the case for the *United States.* Because political dissent over the war was both pervasive and politically responsible (that is, held both by some congressional and some Executive officials involved in the policy process), it was difficult for any administration to develop a peace policy credible to the opponent. Insofar as such a policy did not meet the perceived essential demands of, say, the North Vietnamese, the latter possessed the option of undercutting it through appeals to persons involved in the U.S. policy process who were predisposed to question the moral validity of any American involvement. Thus, any U.S. scheme which would appear to prolong the war would have arrayed against it both the external adversary and a considerable segment of the U.S. opinion elite.[24]

Furthermore, although the Nixon Doctrine, in general, appeared to herald an American military disengagement from East Asia, a number of reservations about its practicability were raised when specifically applied to the Indochina war. One of the doctrine's chief critics is former Defense Department official Earl Ravenal, who argued that it succeeds only in obfuscat-

22. Pike, "Cambodia's War," p. 5.
23. Ibid., p. 14.
24. See the discussion in Robert Rothstein, "Domestic Politics and Peacemaking: Reconciling Incompatible Alternatives," in Fox, *How Wars End;* see also MacAlister Brown, "The Impact of the Indochina Involvement on American Political Institutions," in Zasloff and Goodman, *Indochina in Conflict,* pp. 201–20.

ing the character of and criteria by which the United States would choose to intervene in what it identified as Asian communist insurgencies. According to Ravenal, so long as the United States continued to assert a forward defense/containment policy, it was committed to (a) the defense of Asian real estate and (b) a system of alliances which could entail military involvement. He saw the Nixon Doctrine as an attempt to eat one's cake and have it too by maintaining a deterrent alliance system while changing the character of its American component from manpower to matériel. This is the essence of Vietnamization. However, as Ravenal warned, Vietnamization still bound the United States to the future of Asian clients, diminishing American control over *whether* to become involved in a given conflict and postponing the necessity of reconceptualizing Asia's role in the total context of U.S. foreign policy. Furthermore, by choosing to maintain a forward defense/containment policy with budget-constrained strategies, the United States increased the risks of undergoing future military defeats or stalemates.[25]

The American intervention in Cambodia challenged the Nixon Doctrine's promise of a diminished Asian defense posture; and the subsequent withdrawal of American ground forces did not alter the fact of a broadened American commitment in Indochina. Indeed, the substitution for American forces of Cambodian, South Vietnamese, and—in limited instances—Thai troops, all supplied with American equipment, was viewed as a kind of military equivalent of the economic theory of comparative advantage in which each side in a trade relationship specialized in those products for which its resource endowments were most favorable. Behind the arrangement based on comparative military advantage there was, however, the presumption of a shared mission on the part of those involved—the forward defense of an ally's territory. Because the United States was unwilling to carry on this defense alone, it had to cajole, persuade, subsidize, and perhaps even coerce its allies into supporting the Nixon Doctrine's premises. If there had been no fiscal restraints on U.S. military assistance, the doctrine might have been feasible. But reduced military budgets, beginning in 1970, forced defense planners to allocate force levels on the basis of balancing military organizational interests rather than through the projected needs of a Vietnamization policy. An absence of joint defense planning for the Nixon Doctrine, even though its success depended on ally participation, meant that American contingency plans would continue to be unilateral and subject to

25. Earl C. Ravenal, "The Nixon Doctrine and Our Asian Commitments." Furthermore, President Nixon admitted in a spring 1971 news conference that by the end of that year the U.S. military presence in Vietnam would be reduced to such a low level that it could not undertake future ground operations in Laos or Cambodia. *Department of State Bulletin* 64, no. 1664 (17 May 1971): 631. See also Leslie Gelb, "The Essential Domino," esp. pp. 469–70.

uncommunicated change.[26] Thus, the United States was accused by both friends and enemies of imposing its security perceptions on Asians through force and bribery, without at the same time providing adequate means for fulfilling the commitments it imposed.

Both *Cambodian adversaries* probably prefer some kind of return to reasonable domestic political autonomy even if nonalignment should prove infeasible. However, the emphasis in Cambodia's past foreign policy on both exploiting and avoiding regional conflicts to demonstrate that its independence was of greater worth to the involved parties than its incorporation into one or another alliance arrangement appears to have been rendered obsolete by events since 1970. Some analysts have argued that Lon Nol lost the nonalignment option when he refused to continue Sihanouk's policy of permitting Vietnamese communist forces the continued use of eastern Cambodian sanctuaries.[27] However, this view ignores the fact that North Vietnam had become increasingly ensconced in and aggressive from these border areas some months prior to Lon Nol's take-over. Hostile activities emanating from the sanctuaries had the effect of undercutting Cambodian nonalignment, in the views of Saigon and Washington even before Prince Sihanouk's deposition. One could even further explain Lon Nol's refusal to negotiate with the Vietnamese communists after his ultimatum of March 12, 1970, for a complete withdrawal as a misguided (because infeasible) attempt to return Cambodia to classical nonalignment. If such a goal did indeed motivate the new Cambodian premier, then he violated one important aspect of Prince Sihanouk's previously successful nonalignment formula: to move on the basis of existing regional threats in order to balance—but not alienate—the current adversary.[28]

Lon Nol's decision to align with the United States and South Vietnam may have increased his military capacity without fundamentally adding to Cambodia's ability to force North Vietnam out. Even limited military victories over the VPA would remain inconclusive so long as the infrastructure and access to North Vietnam remained.

Although President Nixon projected a future for Cambodia in the context of a regional defense arrangement, Southeast Asian specialists were not particularly sanguine about prospects for such a development. The President expressed the hope that "in time the combined populations of 28 million in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia with assistance from their regional partners should more than balance the resources of North Vietnam,

26. Earl C. Ravenal, "The Nixon Doctrine: Disengagement or Confrontation?" in Ravenal, *Peace with China?*, pp. 24–39.

27. U.S., Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Cambodia: May 1970—A Staff Report* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1970), p. 9.

28. For a theoretical discussion of this principle, see Wolfram A. Hanrieder, *Foreign Policies and the International System*, p. 16.

with its population of 20 million."[29] The difficulty with the President's projection was its assumption of social and political cohesion in the remainder of Indochina comparable to that existing in highly centralized communist North Vietnam. Empirical research directed to the question of national political viability through the 1970's and prospects for indigenous regional defense arrangements reached no very sanguine results. John Badgley predicted low political viability for both Cambodia and Laos on the basis of assessing the natural resource base, manpower, transport and communications systems, energy output, productivity, and political, economic, and military institutions of these countries. The present author examined threat perceptions among Asian states from the last half of the 1960's through 1972 and could find no common threat source or agreed strategy to handle security challenges which may arise.[30]

Peking's Asian security outlook displayed ambiguity toward Cambodia. On the one hand, China desired to effect an American exit from the region, weakening the U.S. system of military bases and alliances. A weakened U.S. stature in Asia raises Peking's regional influence potential by default as well as reduces its apprehensions over a potential American military threat either directly against the mainland or indirectly through Peking's bonds with North Korea and North Vietnam. In other words, a U.S. military withdrawal from East Asia diminishes the likelihood of Chinese military involvement in external conflict and permits the CPR leaders to focus on such pressing domestic issues as political consolidation and economic development in the aftermath of the Great Cultural Revolution. The ambiguity arises, however, over the fact that Peking is threatened on more than one front. Insofar as Chinese leaders view the Soviet Union as a greater menace than the United States (one of the implications of President Nixon's February 1972 visit to Peking), it is conceivable that they may not be as anxious privately as they appeared publicly to see a rapid American withdrawal from East Asia. It is conceivable that Peking might have preferred a *gradual* American disengagement from Asia so that U.S. forces would remain part of a tacit deterrent to any precipitate Soviet military plans.[31] Noteworthy, according to this logic, were reports of the conversations Chou En-lai held with U.S. congressional leaders Hale Boggs and Gerald Ford in the summer of 1972, cautioning the United States against a precipitate military withdrawal from Asia lest the Soviet Union rapidly replace it. Along the same lines was the absence of any insistence on China's part that the Japan–U.S.

29. Richard M. Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A Report to the Congress.* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Feb. 1971), p. 86.

30. John Badgley, *Asian Development: Problems and Prognosis,* p. 78; and Sheldon W. Simon, "A Systems Approach to Security in the Indian Ocean Arc" and "The Nixon Doctrine and Prospects for Asian Regional Security Cooperation," *Asian Forum,* January–March 1973.

31. See Arthur Huck, *Security of China,* p. 89, for reasoning along these lines.

security treaty be terminated as a condition for the normalization of relations between Peking and Tokyo. Indeed, according to Japanese sources, the subject was not even discussed during Prime Minister Tanaka's September 1972 visit to the Chinese capital.

Finally, J. L. S. Girling pointed to one more element of ambiguity in China's posture toward the Indochina war and, by implication, a Cambodian settlement. A united Vietnam with a hegemonic position in Indochina would constitute a much less attractive political situation on mainland Southeast Asia for Peking than a balkanized peninsula, at least a part of which would retain its neutrality.[32] In order to maintain some influence over a communist Vietnam, then, China might have preferred to see some residual U.S. forces remaining in the region to back an independent Cambodia. Paradoxically, however, if America's primary aim in the war was to "contain" China, then Vietminh control of Indochina would be a satisfactory outcome! Thus, one could devise a scenario in which China would prefer to see a gradual American withdrawal from Indochina in order to weaken North Vietnam, while U.S. officials might prefer a stronger North Vietnam to inhibit any putative Chinese designs on mainland Southeast Asia! In such a situation, the United States would wish to leave Indochina more rapidly than the CPR might desire.[33]

Bargaining postures toward the Cambodian war

We turn now to the final section of our analysis of potential solutions to the Cambodian war by examining explicitly stated actor positions about preferred outcomes. By first comparing these positions separately across actors and then by combining stated positions with overall national conceptions of the war, points of both congruence and incongruence may well appear. From these patterns it should then be possible to project the likelihood of Cambodia's return to nonalignment—the ostensible goal of both contending Cambodian leaderships—and to draw some more general conclusions about the problems of maintaining a nonaligned status when surrounded by contentious neighbors.

(1) *An international conference settlement*

The first bargaining posture to be considered does not deal directly with a settlement per se but rather with the appropriate setting in which a settlement could occur. The importance of the setting is illustrated by the amount of attention devoted to it by virtually all of the actors, for the setting could

32. J. L. S. Girling, *People's War*, p. 46.
33. This scenario is presented as a logical possibility, not a probable outcome.

determine the kind of behavior deemed acceptable or appropriate in the settlement itself.

The idea of international negotiations to settle the Cambodian hostilities was broached by French and Soviet leaders in April 1970 and again through a resolution on Cambodia passed by the September 1970 Lusaka Conference of nonaligned heads of state. The resolution asserted that "a just and peaceful solution" could be found "only through negotiations between the parties concerned."[34] The Soviet proposal, voiced by U.N. Ambassador Malik, which called for a new Geneva Conference on Indochina, was withdrawn after only two days, however, when it became apparent that North Vietnam was uninterested and in any case insisted that South Vietnam must be considered separately from any Indochina-wide settlement.[35]

Conference prospects for Cambodia lay dormant, then, until President Nixon's national television address of October 7, 1970, in which he presaged his eight-point peace initiative of January 1972 by proposing a cease-fire in place and a peninsula-wide peace conference.[36] The seriousness of Nixon's offer was questioned, however, because of the accompanying propaganda emphasis that the necessity for an Indochina-wide conference resulted from North Vietnamese aggression throughout the peninsula and that Sihanouk's presence at such a conference would be unwelcome since "the forces in Cambodia facing the Government of Cambodia are North Vietnamese."[37] Despite the accuracy of both Nixon's and Rogers' statements on North Vietnam's role in Indochina, they were obviously calculated less to persuade the North Vietnamese to move to the conference table than to score debating points with both international public opinion and the United States Congress, which was considering stepped-up military and economic aid to Cambodia in late 1970.

Peking contemptuously rejected the Nixon conference proposal as "merely a plot which U.S. imperialism has been engineering for a long time to strangulate the revolutionary struggle of the Indochinese people through international intervention."[38] Of course, the American refusal to permit Prince Sihanouk's attendance at any projected conference assured Peking's opposition, since the Prince had become the CPR's particular client. The Prince himself, not to be outdone by Washington, reversed Nixon's and Rogers' criteria for conference participation by insisting that his Front "would accept a conference under the condition that Mr. Lon Nol and his puppet regime . . . do not attend this conference and under the condition

34. *Tanjug* (Belgrade), 10 Sept. 1970.

35. Edith Lenart, "After the Shooting," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 27 March 1971, p. 8.

36. The text of Nixon's address of 7 Oct. 1970 may be found in the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* 63, no. 1635 (26 Oct. 1970): 465–67.

37. Secretary of State Rogers news conference of 9 Oct. 1970, ibid., p. 473.

38. Commentator, *People's Daily,* 13 Oct. 1970.

that we alone are invited to it."[39] North Vietnam had earlier stated its objections to any international negotiations which included the Phnom Penh government by objecting to the "tacit recognition" which would be provided to "the coup leaders' clique" through any conference.[40] This same position was taken in a RGNUC statement officially rejecting the Nixon proposal: "Under the present circumstances, the idea of an international conference on Indochina is aimed only at legalizing the U.S. aggression against and occupation of the countries of Indochina, and, so far as Cambodia is concerned, at legalizing the puppet administration resulting from the coup d'état organized at the instigation of U.S. imperialism."[41]

In interviews with Western newsmen and scholars, the Prince underlined his reliance on Peking's good will and the necessity for China's inclusion in any negotiated settlement to the Indochina war. In effect, Sihanouk may have been representing Peking's interests vis-à-vis Hanoi in these statements as much as its attitude toward Washington. Sihanouk insisted that the Cambodian war could not be resolved between North Vietnam and America but only between his Front and the United States—once again a situation which would provide more influence for the CPR than would the American proposal. However, as the Prince himself admitted: "We want to negotiate directly with Nixon, and Nixon will never accept this. Therefore, there is no solution."[42]

Chou En-lai corroborated Sihanouk's viewpoint. In an interview with the Zagreb newspaper *Vjesnik,* Chou stated that "the talks on the withdrawal of the American aggressive troops and their allies from Vietnam and Indochina are a matter for those sovereign states. . . . We cannot mediate, and we have no grounds for mediating."[43] Like Sihanouk, the CPR premier seemed to repudiate any need for an Indochina-wide conference settlement, perhaps because Hanoi would be able to confirm its dominance in such a setting. The CPR reiterated essentially this position in its reaction to Nixon's eight-point proposal of January 25, 1972, on Indochina. The Peking government chose to ignore entirely the U.S. President's call for an Indochina conference and confined itself to restating support for the PRGSV seven-point plan for total U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and the remainder of Indochina.[44] The Lon Nol government, in contrast, stated that it "approves and encourages all initiatives and proposals susceptible [to] bringing peace back to the region through a negotiated settlement."[45] Noteworthy in the communiqué was an

39. Sihanouk, press conference released by NCNA, 11 Oct. 1970.
40. Radio Hanoi in Vietnamese, 2 April 1970.
41. RGNUC, statement of 11 Oct. 1970, released by NCNA, 13 Oct.
42. Alessandro Casella, interview with Prince Sihanouk in the *Bangkok World,* 7 Feb. 1971.
43. *Vjesnik* (Zagreb) 28 Aug. 1971.
44. CPR government statement released by NCNA on 4 Feb. 1972.
45. Khmer Republic government communiqué on Nixon's Eight-Point Peace Plan excerpted in the *Republic* (Ann Arbor), Jan./Feb. 1972, p. 11.

implicit reversal of Phnom Penh's earlier refusal to negotiate with Sihanouk's Front, at least insofar as the Phnom Penh statement neither specified nor excluded any particular adversaries for the negotiation. This flexibility was not emulated by the FUNK, however, which "assures the Lon Nol–Sirik Matak–Son Ngoc Thanh traitors that we will have nothing to do with 'negotiations' and 'settlement,' and we do not want to sit with you dogs because . . . you are lackeys of at least three masters. . . . Our people are . . . winning victories in all fields. We, therefore, refuse to have talks with you traitors, who are already half dead."[46]

The FUNK's confidence in its own and Hanoi's long-term military prospects combined with Peking's reticence over an Indochina-wide conference for its own geopolitical reasons militated against the probability of such negotiations. There is even some evidence that the Soviet Union urged Front representatives to agree to a conference which, if successful, from the Soviet viewpoint, might hold Chinese influence in check. Thus, RGNUC envoy Ieng Sary, who traveled extensively for the Front, "condemned the design of certain big powers to control Cambodia under the pretext of extending aid. . . . They want us to negotiate with the enemy; we will resolutely refuse such aid."[47] Similarly, Sihanouk branded "a 'third solution' to the Khmer problem formulated by certain European powers" (the USSR and France?) as "senseless and dangerous illusions."[48]

When, in October 1972, a breakthrough occurred in the Paris talks over a Vietnam cease-fire, Point Seven of the draft accord between the DRV and the United States prohibited the use of Cambodian and Laotian territory for aggression against their neighbors.[49] This admittedly vague statement could be interpreted to mean that Hanoi would at least temporarily forgo further hostilities in Cambodia and perhaps even stop supplying Khmer Rouge forces. Sihanouk himself may have suspected this outcome as he insisted that it was "senseless thinking" to believe that the RGNUC and CPLAF would "vanish in thin air" upon a Vietnamese communist peace agreement with the United States.[50] While admitting that a cease-fire could lead to a cessation of communist supplies to FUNK forces, the Prince insisted that "at the present time we have in stock arms and ammunition for two years of war. The Lon Nol clique, on its part, will be deprived of U.S. air cover, of the Saigon troops' protection, and of U.S. military aid. It will be easy for us to quickly finish off this clique."[51]

46. Voice of the FUNK in Cambodian, 17 Feb. 1972. The FUNK's refusal to negotiate with Phnom Penh remained adamant throughout 1973.

47. NCNA, 22 Sept. 1971.

48. Sihanouk, Twenty-Seventh Message to the Khmer Nation, released by NCNA, 24 Sept. 1971. Both Sihanouk and the FUNK devoted increasing attention to rejecting a "third solution" during 1972 as prospects for a Vietnam settlement improved.

49. Hanoi's version of the draft accord was released by VNA on 26 Oct. 1972.

50. Sihanouk, 50th birthday speech, NCNA, 30 Oct. 1972.

51. Agence France Presse, 8 Nov. 1972.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam cease-fire agreement of January 1973, the CPLAF forces actually increased the tempo of their activities in Cambodia as if to underscore the difference between RGNUC/FUNK goals for Cambodia and any projected end to the Vietnam conflict. Prolonged American B-52 attacks against the insurgents seemed to be the only barrier against a complete FUNK take-over of the countryside. American officials justified the extensive bombing of Cambodian territory on two grounds: (i) it was requested by the Lon Nol government and (ii) the Vietnam communists were using Cambodian territory, in violation of the January accord, to resupply communist forces in South Vietnam. It seemed, then, that the United States had returned to its 1970 position of sustaining a noncommunist Cambodian government on the grounds of the exigencies of the Vietnam war—except that by 1973 the American role in that war had ostensibly been terminated!

To conclude these rather pessimistic observations on the prospects for a negotiated settlement to the Cambodian war, three points can be made. (1) So long as Hanoi perceived the Cambodian sanctuaries as essential to its effort in South Vietnam, it had a vested interest in prolonging hostilities in Cambodia. (2) So long as FUNK operations in Cambodia were dependent upon North Vietnamese men and weapons and were subordinated to Hanoi's objectives, the Front could not opt for a separate procedure for settling the war. And in any case, because much of the Cambodian countryside had been abandoned by the Phnom Penh authorities, the FUNK may be quite content with the military attrition of resistance to its activities, as suggested by Sihanouk's remarks in November 1972. (3) Finally, and perhaps most crucial of all, the varying conceptions of the purposes of negotiation between Hanoi—the FUNK—and Peking on the one side versus the United States and the Khmer Republic on the other displayed perhaps insurmountable disparities. From the behavior at the Paris talks on Vietnam, it seemed clear that the North Vietnamese attached highest priority to obtaining a political settlement before any cessation of hostilities. This insistence on not sacrificing military leverage before achieving political objectives reflects Hanoi's bitter post-1954 experience when the Vietminh withdrew from the battlefield and subsequently lost their opportunity to control all of Vietnam. In contrast, American negotiators, in line with the pattern of previous Geneva conferences, were interested first in settling the military confrontation (a cease-fire and the return of prisoners of war) before turning to the specifics of a political solution.[52] In part, the American priorities reflected the belief in Washington that neither Saigon nor Phnom Penh could maintain itself politically over the long run without substantial

52. For a clear delineation of the bargaining differences between the United States and the DRV over South Vietnam, see Bernice A. Carroll, "War Termination and Conflict Theory," in the *Annals*, no. 392 (Nov. 1970).

American aid (the purpose of Vietnamization for the whole Indochina peninsula). North Vietnam and China were aware of this American calculation and perhaps also believed that Vietnamization might work, that is, that noncommunist governments in both Cambodia and South Vietnam could remain in power with continuing U.S. material assistance. Hence, Hanoi's prolonged insistence on an agreement over the political disposition of Vietnam (and by implication, Cambodia) prior to any termination of hostilities.

Even the Vietnam agreement of January 1973, which appeared to reverse Hanoi's priorities on a political settlement and cease-fire, on closer inspection seemed less such a major concession on the DRV's part. Even if the agreement were implemented as signed, it would leave North Vietnamese troops still in place considerably south of the demilitarized zone and in Military Regions II and III—in some cases quite close to Saigon itself; nor were the Cambodian sanctuaries to be evacuated. Thus the option remained open of rapidly reinstituting hostilities after American withdrawal if political trends should not appear favorable to Hanoi.[53]

(2) *A partition of Cambodia?*

One of the reasons a formal conference on the future of Cambodia was resisted by the FUNK concerns Sihanouk's fear that the United States and perhaps even the DRV might be willing to settle for a partition of the country, providing North Vietnam with its sanctuaries in the east while leaving the remainder of Cambodia—at least temporarily—to Phnom Penh. Cession of the eastern provinces to North Vietnam could create an enclave south of the Seventeenth Parallel, consisting of the three northeastern Cambodian provinces of Stung Treng, Rattanakiri, Mondulkiri, the southeastern Laotian province of Attopeu and the western halves of South Vietnam's Pleiku and Kontum provinces. According to Douglas Pike, this region had become the heartland of Vietminh operations by 1970.[54] Indeed, the January 1973 cease-fire agreement seemed to tacitly confirm North Vietnam's control of these strategic border regions.

The RGNUC's first explicit objection to a partition of Cambodia came on July 20, 1970, in a statement commemorating the sixteenth anniversary of the Geneva Accords on Indochina. The RGNUC noted that in only four months of combat the "Liberation Army" had taken over more than two-thirds of the country and therefore refused "to participate in any negotiation . . . aimed at . . . partitioning Cambodia in any way."[55] Prince Sihanouk reiterated this position less than two weeks later and by inference accused

53. See Sheldon W. Simon, "Ceasefire in Vietnam: A View from Hanoi," *International Perspectives* (Ottawa), May/June 1973.
54. Pike, "Cambodia's War," p. 30.
55. RGNUC, statement released by NCNA, 20 July 1970.

the Soviet Union, France, and the United States of advocating partition. Disclaiming any support for the idea from his Asian allies, the Prince stated: "This idea comes from certain powers which officially or *secretly* [emphasis added] support the anti-constitutional and anti-popular fascist regime of Lon Nol and which, standing in fear (rightly) of the inevitable military victory of the FUNK, are trying to help the Lon Nol regime to survive in a part of Cambodia."[56]

While Peking media carried statements by the Prince and the RGNUC rejecting partition, they did not publicize their own position until January 1971, when a *People's Daily* Commentator article rebuffed "solutions of compromise and of partition of Cambodia."[57]

In the late summer of 1971 Sihanouk and the RGNUC, with the CPR's backing, inaugurated a propaganda campaign to demonstrate the Cambodian Front's internal cohesion between communists and Sihanoukists and its independence from Hanoi. A series of visits and speeches by the RGNUC envoy from Cambodia—Ieng Sary—emphasized the Front's unity regardless of the ideological backgrounds of its members. The apparent purpose of this campaign was to demonstrate that Sihanouk's Front "will fight unflinchingly and without accepting compromise . . . still less a partition of Cambodia."[58] The targets of the campaign were any actors who believed Sihanouk's Front could be broken into diverse components, some of whom would be amenable to a partition settlement. Thus, Sihanouk's "prime minister," Penn Nouth, at a "seminar for heads of FUNK and RGNUC diplomatic and political missions" warned that the American goal was "to intimidate us with their brutal strength so we will accept a compromise or divide our country with them."[59]

The Prince's apprehensions over the possible division of his country have persisted despite his disclaimers. In a National Day speech in Peking, he voiced an explicit belief that a conference on Cambodia would bring about the same results as the 1954 Geneva Conference on Vietnam: a division of the country "that would not be acceptable to any Khmer and could only lead our people and other peoples toward a new war."[60] Sihanouk's special minister, Chau Seng, further elaborated this point in an Agence France Presse interview in which he rejected any settlement of Cambodia's problems by others: "The Geneva conferences were a mistake for the Indochinese," he stated. "They meant that the big powers were

56. Sihanouk, press communiqué released by NCNA, 31 July 1970.
57. Commentator, *People's Daily*, 19 Jan. 1971.
58. Sihanouk, Peking banquet address introducing Ieng Sary, NCNA, 25 Aug. 1971.
59. Voice of the FUNK in Cambodian, 30 Oct. 1971. See also Sihanouk, rejections of partition in the RGNUC, Second Anniversary Speech, NCNA, 19 March 1972, and his Thirty-Fifth Message to the Khmer Nation, 19 June 1972.
60. NCNA, 9 Nov. 1971.

settling problems."[61] Translated into Cambodia's then current situation, "big powers" could refer as much to North Vietnam as to the United States, the Soviet Union, and China.

It could be inferred, then, that the RGNUC's main concern over partition was its potential attractiveness to Hanoi (DRV media remaining virtually silent on the issue), its barely covert support by Washington, and its perhaps secret backing from Paris and Moscow. Nixon's eight-point proposal of January 25, 1972, for an Indochina settlement was treated in FUNK media as a trial balloon for partition and, of course, as such was rejected.[62]

There was some evidence emanating from noncommunist sources justifying Sihanouk's concern over a possible division of Cambodia by outside powers. Although Phnom Penh authorities stated publicly like Sihanouk that they opposed partition, there were other reports that members of the Lon Nol government opened discussions with the Russians and North Vietnamese precisely to that end.[63] The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that "several high ranking officials" in Phnom Penh expressed interest in the possibility of a separate bilateral agreement with Hanoi which would offer the *quid pro quo* of agreeing to the prevailing situation of the Vietnamese communists' control of the eastern Cambodian sanctuaries and supply lines in exchange for a withdrawal of their forces from the rest of the country.[64] The obvious difficulty facing such an arrangement, however, was its attempt to divorce Cambodia from the Vietnam war—a position Saigon could scarcely be expected to tolerate. Other sources identified the USSR as the conduit for "unofficial contacts" between the DRV and the Khmer Republic, but added that North Vietnam had been unresponsive.[65]

In brief summary, it appears that partition remained an unlikely prospect for Cambodia despite its pragmatic attraction as a means of ending the hostilities without drastically altering the *status quo* for any of the actors. Because, however, Cambodia was not viewed as a battleground separate from Vietnam, its partition would have been tempting to Hanoi only if DRV leaders came to believe that they were not going to emerge politically and militarily victorious in the South—in other words, that Vietnamization was succeeding. In such an eventuality, an assurance that the Cambodian sanctuaries would be safe havens for supplies and manpower deployment could strengthen North Vietnam's protracted war strategy for the South despite a more viable Republic of Vietnam. It is precisely this scenario,

61. Agence France Presse (Paris) 1 Dec. 1971.

62. Voice of the FUNK in Cambodian, 4 Feb. 1972, and NCNA, 6 Feb. 1972.

63. For a statement by Sirik Matak rejecting the partition of Cambodia, see the Phnom Penh Domestic Service in French, 5 Sept. 1971.

64. Sylvana Foa, "Cambodia: Calling Hanoi," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 Feb. 1972, p. 7.

65. *Asian Student* (San Francisco), 5 Feb. 1972.

moreover, which pointed up the divergent interests of Sihanouk and his North Vietnamese "ally"; to the RGNUC, a partition of Cambodia would confirm *Vietnamese communist control* of a major section of the country for purposes of prosecuting the war in Vietnam and not to effect a restoration of power for the Sihanoukists. Indeed, sustained CPLAF assaults against provincial centers and supply routes in 1973, despite their heavy costs in the form of protracted American bombings, may be designed in part to prove to Hanoi that the Cambodian insurgents have the initiative and organization to take over Cambodia, thus obviating the need for any partition.[66]

(3) *Prospects for protracted war*

The obverse of a partition solution to the Cambodian conflict was a continuation of the protracted war which had been fought throughout the country since the spring of 1970. A protracted war strategy, of course, conforms to the classical military doctrines of both the Chinese communists and Vietminh in which the *political costs* of the war to the adversary are as important as such military objectives as the taking and holding of territory. Protracted war held a particular attraction for North Vietnam, many of whose party and governmental officials viewed the 1954 Geneva Accord on Vietnam as a Western ploy to trick them into abandoning a successful strategy. They appeared determined not to repeat the mistake in Paris and refused to discuss any other aspect of the Indochina war than Vietnam. DRV mass media consistently stressed the importance of a battlefield solution:

> The rich experiences gained during our revolutionary struggle tell us that the aggressors will agree to end the war only when they cannot continue to fight and when their hope of victory has definitely been checked. The balance of forces on the battlefield determines the way the war develops. . . . But the enemy will admit defeat only when the puppet army, the main tool of his Vietnamization-of-the-war strategy and its prop, the U.S. forces, suffer even greater losses. Thus, our people's resistance must continue to progress before we can force the enemy to admit defeat.[67]

President Nixon's February 1972 visit to Peking seemed to reinforce North Vietnam's suspicions over any negotiated settlement in Indochina. Both Chinese-trained Truong Chinh—the number two man in the Lao

66. See Sihanouk, Forty-Second Message to the Khmer Nation, NCNA, 23 March 1973.

67. Editorial on the 41st anniversary of the Vietnam Workers Party, *Nhan Dan*, 3 Feb. 1971.

Dong party hierarchy—and General Giap, just before the President's trip, pointedly reminded the Chinese of Vietnam's history of resisting all (including Chinese) foreign aggression and the DRV's completely independent formulation of everything from defense strategy to international trade policy.[68] Thus, Hanoi reminded its giant ally, if there was to be any negotiated settlement in Indochina it would not come about in Peking.

Infliction of heavy casualties and interdiction of supply routes—both of which characterized Vietminh tactics in Vietnam and Cambodia—served to undermine the political credibility of the Saigon and Phnom Penh governments, forcing them to place increasingly burdensome loads on their populations. A U.S. Army psychological-warfare expert aptly described the character of the protracted war strategy as practiced by the Vietminh. Though writing of the situation in Vietnam, the description could apply equally to Cambodia:

> Guerrillas do not, for example, cut roads to deny them to the enemy as in conventional warfare. They know they cannot keep them cut for any length of time. If they cut the road from, say, Dalat to Saigon, they do so to interrupt the flow of fruit and vegetables to the capital. Stopping these vital supplies even for the briefest of periods means an immediate price rise in Saigon's markets. There is nothing the government can do to help the poor (which means the vast majority of the town's population) who find themselves hard-pressed to pay higher prices for desperately needed food. By holding up the trucks the guerrillas try to make that point: your government cannot protect you; the merest handful of our men can force its hand and reveal its helplessness; . . .
>
> The most effective way to defeat aggression by insurgency is not to kill off the enemy, as in conventional fighting, but to plan and conduct one's strategy and tactics so as to save, secure and protect a maximum of lives, especially the lives of noncombatants, in order to demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt who the terrorists are.[69]

The past success of protracted warfare in Vietnam carried over to the strategy pursued on an Indochina-wide series of fronts. Some two months after the close of the April 1970 Indochinese Peoples' Conference, Peking media were assuring "final victory so long as they support each other . . . and persevere in a protracted people's war."[70] Chou En-lai broadened the context of a protracted war for Cambodia by noting that the American

68. See the very enlightening analysis of North Vietnam's signals to the CPR in Leo Goodstadt's article, "Peking Summit: Fighting to the Last Vietnamese," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 Feb. 1972, pp. 6–7.

69. Reuben S. Nathan, "Planning for Likely Wars," pp. 861–62.

70. Commentator, *People's Daily*, 2 July 1970.

invasion had created a new Asian people's front from Indochina through North Korea for which "the vast expanses of China's territory will forever remain the reliable rear area . . . in a protracted people's war."[71] Peking appeared to be capitalizing on the wider American threat to Indochina by consolidating its preeminent position as the protector of Asian communist states. Stepped-up U.S. military action in Cambodia had the effect of confirming Peking's regional communist leadership vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

RGNUC spokesmen backed the Chinese position from the very beginning of the Front's operations, insisting in press interviews that "the solution for Cambodia will be included in an overall solution for Indochina."[72] And Sihanouk rejected out of hand Nixon's initial cease-fire proposal of October 7, 1970, as a sign of American military exhaustion which would soon lead to the virtual demise of the Lon Nol government.[73] Peking certainly approved of Sihanouk's adamancy and in an editorial commemorating the anniversary of the NFLSV applauded the impact of the Indochina fighting on the United States:

> U.S. imperialism has always tried to realize the objective of its aggression by relying on the superiority of its weapons to fight a brief war and win a quick victory. It is afraid of and cannot stand the dragging on of the war; because once the war is prolonged, its strength will be tied down and worn away, its weak points exposed and the various contradictions it faces at home and abroad sharpened.[74]

Additional Chinese comment stressed the relationship between the wider Indochina war with its dispersed and diverse battle areas and U.S. troop withdrawal, implying that a protracted war effort was certain to be successful as the United States exited.[75]

President Nixon's second appeal for an Indochina cease-fire on January 25, 1972, received the same essentially negative response as his October 1970 effort and for the same reason. From Hanoi's viewpoint, no cease-fire could *precede* a political settlement, since a cessation of hostilities would be tantamount to losing the war. Because infiltration would have to stop, the backbone of North Vietnam's military effort would be broken at the negotiating table where it could not have been on the battlefield.[76]

Similarly, Peking rebuffed the proposed extension of the October 1972 draft Vietnam cease-fire agreement to Laos and Cambodia. Repeating

71. Chou En-lai, speech at a Peking banquet for Prince Sihanouk, NCNA, 5 July 1970.
72. Thiounn Prasith, minister of the RGNUC in Peking, interview by Agence France Presse, 16 Sept. 1970.
73. Sihanouk, communiqué released by NCNA, 15 Oct. 1970.
74. Editorial, *People's Daily,* 19 Dec. 1970.
75. NCNA, 20 May 1971.
76. Commentator, *Nhan Dan,* 10 Feb. 1972.

Sihanouk's objections almost verbatim, the authoritative *People's Daily* Commentator on October 30 rhetorically asked: "As the Paris talks were participated in only by the four parties of Vietnam and the United States, how can Laos and Cambodia come into question?" And according to Sihanouk, before the Paris accord was reached, both Peking and Hanoi promised continued aid to Cambodia even after a separate cease-fire in Vietnam.[77]

The Prince viewed the cease-fire proposals as ruses to obtain "breathing space" for the United States to regather its military and political strength for a new assault against the "liberation forces." To counter the generally favorable reception given in world media to the Nixon proposal of January 1972, the Prince urged direct appeals to "the U.S. Congress and liberal figures of the two great political parties so that they will *cut off* the funds for U.S. military and so-called 'economic' aid to the satellite and mercenary regimes of Phnom Penh, Vientiane, and Saigon."[78] Sihanouk seemed quite concerned about the ultimate success of Vietnamization and the possible sacrifice of Cambodia's interests by Hanoi in such an eventuality. His reaction to the autumn 1972 proposal on Vietnam consequently differed from Hanoi's because the RGNUC had more to lose from the abandonment of a protracted war strategy than the DRV. What Sihanouk appeared to fear most was a decision by Hanoi to cashier the Cambodian "liberation" venture in exchange for a reasonably favorable Vietnam settlement. One way to diminish the probability of such a development would be not only to accelerate an American troop withdrawal but also to build American sentiment for a congressional cutoff of the appropriations needed to sustain the Vietnamization program and American air attacks against communist supply locations and transit routes. If the United States were to withdraw totally from Indochina (manpower, air power, and matériel), the Prince hoped Hanoi would return the RGNUC to Phnom Penh. He knew, however, that Cambodia's disposition was less salient to the DRV than the creation of a PRGSV government in the South and might even be sacrificed in a negotiated solution to the war. Hence, his abhorrence of any Indochina meetings among the adversaries and his insistence on the necessity of protracted struggle.[79]

Both military and diplomatic developments in 1973 seemed to favor Sihanouk and the FUNK. The protracted war strategy appeared to be pay-

77. Agence France Presse, 4 Oct. 1972.

78. Sihanouk, appeal to the Cambodian Liberation Armed Forces, carried by NCNA, 17 Feb. 1972, and his message to the World Assembly for Peace and Independence of the Indochinese Peoples, released by AKI, 12 Feb. 1972.

79. See the RGNUC statement rejecting any application of a cease-fire agreement to Cambodia, NCNA, 24 Oct. 1972. Subsequent North Vietnamese commentary on Cambodia ignored this statement. See also Sihanouk, Forty-Second Message to the Khmer Nation, 23 March 1973.

ing off as U.S. forces withdrew initially from Vietnam and ultimately, as a result of congressional ultimatum, from their aerial bombardment of Cambodia as well. Repeated attempts by the Phnom Penh authorities beginning in July 1973 to initiate discussions with any representative of the insurgents (including Sihanouk) were dismissed by the latter as a signpost of the Front's imminent victory. Penn Nouth definitively summarized the RGNUC's position on negotiations and what it believed to be its final and successful strategy:

> Between the Cambodian people, the FUNK and the RGNUC on the one hand and the traitors Lon Nol, Sirik Matak, Son Ngoc Thanh . . . and their ilk on the other, there is absolutely no compromise, negotiation, and reconciliation. The Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia is the sole legal government of Cambodia. We categorically reject the attempt of creating a "coalition government" with the participation of the traitors as the U.S. imperialists have long wished. . . . The CPLAF are determined to attack and wipe out the enemy . . . till the complete liberation of our dear fatherland [Penn Nouth message, carried by NCNA, 10 Aug. 1973].

(4) *The restoration of nonalignment: an impossible dream?*

We turn now to the first and last question of the full inquiry: Is there a prospect for a return to political nonalignment in Cambodia? Perhaps, a more politically appropriate way of phrasing the query would be to ask what the prospects might be for restoring some degree of political and economic autonomy to Cambodia in the aftermath of the Vietnam war? In grappling with this question one must consider carefully the meaning of nonalignment in the context of Indochina, for it is a concept which must be situationally defined. The substantive maneuverability accorded a nonaligned status would certainly be more circumscribed in Cambodia than, say, Indonesia or India, where neither external nor internal political forces have been so polarized. Nonalignment for a small state like Cambodia (or Finland) located between adversaries is at least partially a function of the evolving relationship between those adversaries. The erstwhile nonaligned state might influence this relationship by its own attitudes and behaviors toward the adversaries, but in the final analysis its ability to stay out of the battle depends on its neighbors' decisions.

In this last section, then, we must examine any articulated public positions on the parts of the actors toward nonalignment for Cambodia. And, from this examination of overt positions on nonalignment combined with overall actor views of the Cambodian war, some speculative projections are offered on prospects for some kind of nonaligned solution for Cambodia.

(a) *Public orientation toward nonalignment.* A content analysis of the mass media of the actors involved in the war shows that specific references to a nonalignment solution emanate virtually exclusively from Sihanouk and his Front. No mention of such an outcome is found in Vietnamese communist, Chinese, or U.S. sources. Phnom Penh—though publicly claiming its continued adherence to nonalignment—has dismissed the prospect of neutralization of Indochina in the semiofficial newspaper *Réalités Cambodgiennes,* where an editorial pointed out that neutralization could not be enforced or guaranteed by powers external to Indochina before a political disposition of the war had been reached among the belligerents.[80] Thus, the Khmer Republic has emphasized, "We have never broken relations with the Chinese. It was they who recalled their ambassador. Juridically, there has not been a rupture, although Peking entirely supports Hanoi. We have an essential reason not to break with China. She is a signatory of the Geneva Accords. Later an accord will be reached and will have to be guaranteed by her."[81] From time to time the Khmer Republic even appealed to the CPR to "cease sponsoring and supporting the illegal government-in-exile of Norodom Sihanouk" as a way of implementing Peking's oft-stated Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.[82] Such appeals would fit with numerous reports in 1972 that Phnom Penh officials were attempting to work out a separate coalition arrangement with elements of the Khmer Rouge which would bypass Sihanouk.[83]

While Phnom Penh has been skeptical over nonalignment as a solution to its problems prior to a political settlement satisfactory to the belligerents, Sihanouk has hoped to combine both membership in an international front led by Hanoi *and* an independent nonaligned status within that front. In an interview with *Le Monde,* soon after the Front's establishment, the Prince stated that both Peking and Hanoi "told me in so many words that they would like Cambodia to maintain, after its liberation, its policy of nonalignment and avoid proclaiming itself 'socialist' or 'communist.' "[84] And among nonaligned governments, the Prince's attestations appeared to be successful. The RGNUC was seated at both the September 1970 Lusaka Congress of nonaligned states and at the August 1972 Georgetown meeting, while Phnom Penh was turned away—a manifestation of the general anti-American orientation of the third world toward the Indochina war which has carried over in its attitudes toward the Lon Nol government.

80. *Réalités Cambodgiennes,* 28 May 1971.

81. Embassy of the Khmer Republic, *Information Bulletin* no. 16 (Dec. 1971): 5, quoted in the *Republic* (Ann Arbor), Jan./Feb. 1972, p. 10.

82. Khmer government statement on the U.S.-CPR joint communiqué, Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 2 March 1972.

83. J. L. S. Girling, "The Resistance in Cambodia," p. 563.

84. Sihanouk, interview in *Le Monde,* 26 Aug. 1970.

In comments to Western observers, the Prince has stressed that both China and Vietnam will respect Cambodia's independence as "a reassuring example for other small countries in the world." Nevertheless, Sihanouk has made it clear that he sees China as his mentor against North Vietnam's interests. Thus, in discussing Nixon's desire to negotiate an end to the Indochina war with Hanoi, the Prince made two related points:

> Nixon says that there is no civil war in Cambodia, but only a North Vietnamese aggression, and he wants to negotiate the end of the war in Cambodia with Hanoi. It is, of course, totally inconceivable that the North Vietnamese will ever agree to negotiate with Nixon on the subject of Cambodia because this would mean that they acknowledge the veracity of Nixon's interpretation of events.

But even in the eventuality that Hanoi tried to negotiate a total Indochinese package, Sihanouk averred:

> China will support us to the end, and if we are not represented at a conference, the Chinese will not participate either. And if China does not participate, there can be no conference. . . . I think that China will help us to be independent one from another. Just imagine that Vietnam would want to colonize Cambodia. Well, China will not permit it.[85]

Despite his hope that Peking would insure Cambodia against being incorporated into a possible future Vietminh-controlled Indochina federation, the Prince was aware of his country's importance to North Vietnam in the context of the latter's objectives in the South. He indirectly accepted the violation of Cambodian territory by Vietminh forces: "Now, let us suppose that we will be free, and South Vietnam remains occupied. Under such a situation Cambodia cannot consider itself to be secure. Premier Pham Van Dong says with complete correctness that none of our countries can enjoy independence and feel secure when its neighbor remains under foreign occupation."[86] In effect, the Prince was admitting that no resolution of Cambodia's status could precede a solution to the Vietnam segment of the Indochina war. And so, in fact, both the Prince and his Phnom Penh adversaries agreed that the future of Cambodia depended on the outcome of the Vietnam hostilities.

By casting his lot with the Indochinese Front and Peking, however, the Prince became the only noncommunist member of a loose grouping of Asian communist states (CPR, DRV, DPRK) and movements (PRGSV

85. Sihanouk, interview with Casella, *Bangkok World,* 7 Feb. 1971. Virtually all of Sihanouk's remarks dealing with a solution to the Cambodian war during 1972 developed this theme.

86. Sihanouk, interview in *Lumea* (Bucharest), 7 Jan. 1971.

and Pathet Lao). Although Sihanouk insisted that "the formation of the front and its development is necessary and beneficial to defeat the U.S. imperialists and their accomplices," his dependence undoubtedly limited the RGNUC's options in a postwar political settlement.[87] At one point the Prince ingenuously confessed that "if one day, a solution acceptable to all is adopted at the Paris conference on the problem of South Vietnam, it is evident that the problem of Cambodia and that of Laos will disappear *ipso facto*."[88]

President Nixon's proposals of January and October 1972 for an Indochina settlement, although providing some concessions over the earlier U.S. negotiating position on Vietnam, contained essentially the same provisions as his October 1970 offer with respect to Cambodia: that is, an Indochina-wide cease-fire and cessation of infiltration of outside forces. The Nixon proposal—which had been discussed secretly in Paris beginning May 31, 1971—stressed that all armed forces of the Indochinese countries must remain within their national frontiers. This proviso constituted a basic disagreement with the DRV nine-point plan of June 26, 1971, Point Six of which stated in part that "the problems existing between the Indochinese countries will be settled by the Indochinese parties on the basis of mutual respect for independence." Such a proposal, of course, would not preclude Vietminh participation in a peninsula-wide settlement. While the verbiage of the October 1972 draft cease-fire agreement—insofar as it dealt with Cambodia in Point Seven—seemed to follow the earlier Nixon insistence on the withdrawal of all foreign forces, because Hanoi refused to acknowledge the presence of any such forces in Cambodia, there was less of a Vietminh concession than at first appeared. Indeed, it seemed that any reference to Cambodia and Laos in the October proposal was of secondary concern. This belief was verified in the January 1973 cease-fire agreement, Article VII of which stated only that all foreign military activities in Cambodia should cease. There was no attempt to make that provision operative, nor did Hanoi admit the presence of its troops on Cambodian soil.

While the Khmer Republic unenthusiastically endorsed the 1972 proposals by "encouraging any initiative or proposal that can bring about peace in Indochina through negotiation," the RGNUC adamantly opposed them.[89] Whereas Phnom Penh authorities in their statement of January 29, 1972, appeared to modify their earlier refusal to negotiate with the Sihanoukists, no similar concession was made by Sihanouk or the FUNK. The Prince

87. Sihanouk, lecture in P'yongyang, KCNA, 9 Aug. 1971.

88. Sihanouk, speech in Algiers, NCNA, 28 June 1972. It appeared, however, that the January 1973 Paris agreement led neither to a real settlement in Vietnam nor to the disappearance of the Cambodian conflict.

89. The Khmer Republic low-key endorsement of Nixon's peace proposal of 25 Jan. 1972 was broadcast in the Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 29 Jan. 1972. An equally qualified statement on the October draft agreement was broadcast on 27 Oct. 1972.

maintained: "For us in Cambodia a solution to the war can be voiced only at a conference like the Paris talks, but on a bilateral basis. We are ready to talk with the United States, but we would refuse all participation by the puppets of the illegal Phnom Penh regime."[90] An RGNUC "interior" (from Cambodia) statement, released at the same time, while also rejecting the Nixon proposal, differed from Sihanouk's interview by not even mentioning the possibility of a negotiated settlement for the war, but continuing to emphasize instead "struggle without compromise" as the only solution.[91]

By late 1972, the RGNUC displayed adamant opposition to any extension of a cease-fire agreement to Cambodia which it had no part in negotiating. The Peking branch of the RGNUC denounced the prospect as a maneuver to "divide Cambodia" and "sabotage the unity of the FUNK."[92] RGNUC officials adhered to this position in 1973 as well. Sihanouk bemoaned the fact that Henry Kissinger refused to meet with him in Peking to engage in bilateral talks. And General Duong Sam Ol, the chairman of the FUNK in Peking, insisted that the Front would carry on the struggle until final victory.[93] Furthermore, the Cambodian insurgents warned the International Control and Supervisory Commission not to stray onto Cambodian territory.[94]

Hanoi could hardly be expected to accept a cease-fire in Cambodia while Phnom Penh remained an American ally; the continuation of the war was Hanoi's prime bargaining counter. And RGNUC spokesmen publicly branded any cease-fire or compromise an "unreliable and temporary peace."[95] Implied in such a statement was a tacit prediction that until one side should drive the other back inside its national boundaries (the DRV) or force a withdrawal from the peninsula (the United States), there could be no settlement, since negotiations and pauses would be used to strengthen the military capabilities of each side. The increasingly inept showing of the FANK in ground combat during the course of 1973 led Sihanouk to point out gleefully:

> So we see this paradoxical situation: On the one hand President Nixon wants to have done with us as quickly as possible in launching against us an air war breaking all past records in intensity (every

90. Sihanouk, interview with Agence France Presse, 27 Jan. 1972.

91. RGNUC (Interior), statement on Nixon's proposal of 25 Jan. 1972, carried by the Voice of the FUNK, in Cambodian, 27 Jan. 1972.

92. RGNUC statement released by NCNA, 24 Oct. 1972.

93. Sihanouk, Forty-Second Message to the Khmer Nation, 23 March 1973, and NCNA 25 March 1973.

94. AKI in French, 17 Feb. 1973, and the Voice of the FUNK in Cambodian, 20 Feb. 1973.

95. Thiounn Prasith, RGNUC minister in charge of coordinating the national liberation struggle, address to the Versailles Assembly, NCNA, 16 Feb. 1972. See also Sihanouk, 50th birthday speech, NCNA, 30 Oct. 1972.

day our air space receives up to 120 B-52 and dozens of F-105, F-111 and AC-130 aircraft), and on the other hand he is supplying us with arms, munitions, and tanks, which scarcely allow us to "bend our knees" and to "declare quit," quite on the contrary [Sihanouk speech to Chou En-lai, *Peking Review* (16), 20 April 1973, p. 9].

(b) *Prospects for a nonaligned solution for Cambodia.* The findings of content analysis for various actor perceptions of the Cambodian segment of the Indochina war point to both congruences and incongruences in the concepts of allies and enemies. More than any other possible outcome of the conflict (military victory, defeat, stalemate, or partition) the restoration of Cambodia's political autonomy outside the context of any security relationship with its neighbors would require the explicit agreement of all the antagonists. Thus, any return to nonalignment would entail conceptual congruities on the nature of the conflict and its preferred or, at least, acceptable outcome. The findings of the present study, however—based admittedly only on documents available to the public—suggested that conceptual congruences on the nature and stakes of the conflict were not sufficient for a negotiated settlement when the preferred outcomes radically differed.

(i) We found that Hanoi, Washington, Peking, and Phnom Penh agreed generally that Cambodia's involvement in the war was closely related to the primary Vietnam theater of operations. The only exception to this view was Sihanouk, who insisted that any solution for Cambodia be reached separately through bilateral arrangements with the United States, despite his simultaneous public adherence to the Indochinese Peoples United Front.

(ii) There also seemed to be general consensus that Peking was not directly involved in the Cambodian hostilities, although once again Sihanouk insisted that no solution to the Indochina conflict could be made to work without China's participation and concurrence. The Prince's insistence on a Chinese input into any Indochina settlement was interpretable as his attempt to follow a policy of balance even in adversity—in this case to counter any plans by North Vietnam to establish an Indochina federation under its aegis.

(iii) Although there was little evidence to suggest that the social and economic milieu in Cambodia was conducive to a locally generated war of insurgency, the military weakness of the central government rendered the country vulnerable to outside intervention. Furthermore, the persistence of North Vietnam's intervention was reinforced by the general belief that the United States was in the process of disengaging from Indochina, while Hanoi's commitment was seen as more salient and hence more long-term. Even Phnom Penh authorities displayed concern that they could be sacrificed to Vietnam in the course of a negotiated settlement.

While points i–iii above were generally accepted by all of the actors as descriptive of the nature of the war, preferred outcomes did not converge in a similar fashion. For Hanoi, Cambodia provided an indispensable logistical route into South Vietnam and a potential sphere of influence in a postwar Indochina through the DRV's long-term relationship with the Khmer Rouge and the latter's key position within Sihanouk's Front. Any solution of the Cambodian war which would provide political autonomy for the country appeared unacceptable to Hanoi because the "loss" of Cambodia would be unnecessary for its other goals. That is, Cambodia was no poker chip for the DRV, but an integral part of the Indochina war in which South Vietnam remained the primary but by no means sole goal for the North.

Peking's main goal in Indochina—one the CPR has sought since the Korean War—was to see American military power removed from mainland Southeast Asia. China would prefer that this be accomplished in the setting of a balkanized Indochina, thus insuring Peking's dominant role in the region, but appeared willing to accept as a "satisfising" solution North Vietnamese dominance so long as the United States was forced out.

Sihanouk attempted to buttress Peking's interest in a balkanized peninsula as the only way to restore Cambodian autonomy in a postwar setting. Statements emanating from the "interior" branch of his Front, however, appeared to follow the North Vietnamese line on the importance of an Indochina-wide settlement. This disparity suggests that the Prince had become little more than a figurehead in his own liberation movement, which was beholden to North Vietnam for its supplies, strategy, and in all probability, political future as well.

For the United States, the Cambodian war was a tactical afterthought designed to improve the prospects for Vietnamization and hence permit the reduction of American ground forces in Vietnam without too great a loss in international prestige. The American move appeared to have had some success in Vietnam by mid-1972. However, its effect on Cambodia was only slightly short of disastrous. The country was soon in the midst of a war with which it had neither the financial nor human resources to cope. The Phnom Penh government was dependent for its very existence on airborne and waterborne supplies from United States military bases, just as Sihanouk's Front operated at the behest of North Vietnam. In short, both Cambodian adversaries became proxies for or extensions of the war in Vietnam. And neither side in the Vietnam conflict was likely to permit the restoration of peace in Cambodia before a total settlement of hostilities in the peninsula.

We have seen, then, that although conceptions of the war on the part of most of the actors were remarkably similar, the restoration of peace and some form of nonalignment to Cambodia appeared highly unlikely because

of the differences in preferred outcomes and the unwillingness of the adversaries substantially to modify those preferences. The contending Cambodian elites possessed little or no maneuverability because of the total dependence of each on its ally. Because the long-term trend appeared to militate against the United States in the region, it was conceivable that elements in the Phnom Penh government unsuccessfully sought clandestine contacts with Hanoi to try to arrange a separate settlement or even approached Peking for much the same reason that led Sihanouk to want to sustain a Chinese presence in the conflict.

If any conclusion can be drawn from this study of hostilities which were still being prosecuted in 1973, it must, of course, be tentative and hedged. It does appear, however, that the fundamental formula for Sihanouk's success in keeping Cambodia nonaligned and peaceful was due more to its neighbors' belief that the country's involvement in the Vietnam war was unnecessary than any particularly skillful maneuvering on the part of the Prince. Once those neighbors and their external backers believed the use of Cambodian territory *essential* for their goals in Vietnam, the days of Cambodia's nonalignment were numbered. In retrospect, this author agrees with Douglas Pike that once the North Vietnamese opted for big-unit battles (1967–68) requiring comprehensive supply and training locations close to the Vietnamese battlefield, Cambodia had lost its nonaligned status, through no fault of its own. Its incorporation into the Vietnam war was perceived as a military necessity, first for one side and then for the other. Because of Phnom Penh's own military weakness, it could do nothing to reverse this course of action. Cambodia's nonalignment was no longer expedient to the adversaries. Hence, it was no longer honored.

Annex I. On objectives, methods, and sources of this study

A useful way of examining the Cambodian conflict is to determine how it has fitted into the objectives of the major actors in Indochina as these objectives evolve with changes in the way the actors conceive their own security needs. It was disparities in the importance of this or that particular political orientation toward Cambodia between North Vietnam, China, and the United States which led to the widening of the Vietnam war to engulf Cambodia.[1] These disparities were based on considerations of global versus regional interests, size, ideology, military needs, and the demands of social reform. Disparities existed not only between the actors but also within their decision-making leaderships. A discussion, then, of the meaning of Cambodia for the regional policies of each state should expose important differences among the actors—differences which presumably would have to be reconciled before the conflict could be ended.

The ambiguity of American objectives in Indochina for more than a decade reflected doubts within the U.S. government over the meaning and importance of communist-based insurgency for American policy and America's global posture. The decade also exposed the disparity between the objectives of a state with global concerns and the objectives of the small states within or bordering on Indochina, the importance of whose contiguous environment to them is that it may determine their very survival. Insofar as the successful foreign policy of any state is at all the product of expectations shared between its leaders and the leaders of the states (both friendly and hostile) with which it interacts, one way of projecting developments in Indochina will be through assessing the diverse ways in which the major actors conceived the conflict, since it is on the basis of these conceptions that foreign policy is made. These are what we call "actor perceptions" and "actor conceptions"—the ways that the decisionmakers of this or that concerned power see things and think of things.

The success of any settlement of the Indochina conflict has not ceased to depend on the development of shared expectations on the part of the antagonists about the region's future. In the course of such a development, traditional notions of international relationships like nonalignment and alliance have already had to be reconsidered, as new interstate patterns appear which display a mix of domestic insurgency, intervention from outside, limited war, propaganda appeals to third parties, and continuing negotiations.

It is the task of this study to explore a late and still seething development of the Indochina conflict: the war in Cambodia which grew out of the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk in March 1970 (but whose origins antedate that event) and the subsequent American/South Vietnamese intervention, domestic insurgency, intensive propaganda directed to gaining external support, and unceasing protestations on the part of the main contenders that Cambodia had not lost and would never lose her nonaligned status.

If an international conflict which is not unconditionally won by one of the

1. The intensification of the war in Laos through areas in which branches of the Ho Chi Minh Trail were located also occurred concurrently with the Cambodian intervention in Cambodia. Military activity in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam was thus always correlated with North Vietnamese efforts to maintain supply routes into the South. The Laotian aspect of the Indochina war is not treated in our limited analysis.

belligerents is to be settled, it is the hypothesis of this study that shared expectations must be built up among the contenders. Therefore it is crucial that the analyst determine whether the conceptions, policies, and saliences of the conflict among the major participants are *congruent*. He must examine the governance and the probabilities of survival for the Lon Nol regime and Sihanouk's "national liberation movement," and analyze further how these appeared to each of the Cambodian factions and to U.S., Chinese, and North and South Vietnamese leaders—i.e., how they were "perceived."

In two major respects the rival Cambodian governments and their mentors' policies may be compared for congruence. (i) What kind of political settlement did each prefer for Indochina and Cambodia? In Sihanouk's case, for example, we examine the balance principles underlying his security policy before and after his forced association with North Vietnam and China. Is there evidence that he attempted to maneuver among his new allies in order to maintain some degree of independence and legitimacy for himself as the rightful head of the Cambodian state? Similarly, we examine the American and South Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia and support of the Lon Nol government.

(ii) Was each contending actor willing to see the war extended in order to achieve its national purposes regardless of the effects on Cambodian neutrality? An analysis of the Chinese and North Vietnamese conceptions of the future that they preferred for Cambodia could reveal whether China's earlier reticence about a unified Indochina has been overtaken by the new Indochinese Peoples' Movement and whether North Vietnam has been able to acquire and sustain an Indochina-wide politico-military organization for the first time since the 1954 Geneva Conference. For Lon Nol's government, how compatible is his almost total dependence on American and South Vietnamese military support and economic aid with his persistent claim that his government is neutral? An assessment here suggests that we may need to redefine or even abandon the concept of neutrality in any serious investigation of Indochina.

The questions above focus on regional balance and foreign-policy orientation of the major actors, but there is another face of the conflict equally deserving of attention. It concerns the internal characteristics of the rival Cambodian regimes and how well their models of political control and development suit the country's social milieu. The North Vietnamese and Chinese backing Sihanouk's countergovernment helped to create and sustain a united front for Cambodia's liberation, extensively copied from both allies' own revolutionary experiences, particularly the "united front from below." This strategy, as applied in Cambodia after the spring of 1970, called for the energetic incitement of revolution by any and all forces opposing the regime in order to accelerate the alienation of the rural population from the incumbent government. An analysis of the prospects of this movement must consider whether Cambodian land tenure and demographic characteristics are enough like those of South Vietnam for widespread social discontent to be also available for mobilization in Cambodia.

If the prospects for indigenous "national liberation" in Cambodia were not comparable to those in South Vietnam (that is, if there was little indigenous support in Cambodia for Sihanouk's North Vietnamese-backed countergovernment), then the conflict became much more clearly a case of Vietnamese aggression, primarily from the North but also from the South so far as portions of southeastern Cambodia become virtual South Vietnamese enclaves. It was at this point that the regional balance considerations for Cambodia's future meshed with the prospects for a successful "national liberation movement" on

Cambodian soil. That is, if the prospects for a home-grown Cambodian revolutionary effort were not propitious and if the major contenders were aware of these limited prospects, then the Cambodian war would become exclusively and quite visibly but an extension of the war in South Vietnam and another case of unacknowledged North Vietnamese and overt South Vietnamese and American intervention (as in Laos).

Hopes for a negotiated settlement of the Cambodian war, if there emerge congruent expectations of what the prospects were for "national liberation" there, depended on the abilities of *both* contending Cambodian leaderships to convince their backers that the state's independence was of greater value to the future of all than would be either its incorporation into a Vietminh-controlled Indochina or its balkanization into South and North Vietnamese control zones.

It is a premise of this study that solutions for violent international conflict depend on the development of shared beliefs about the probabilities of the conflict's outcome and the desirable future international pattern for the area; thus it is the analyst's task to determine whether the conceptions and subsequent policies of the major actors appear to converge or diverge. Although the theoretical orientation of the study deals with national foreign-policy conceptions and outputs as a function of perceived environmental changes, the national foreign-policy decision-making process itself is "black boxed" because of the infeasibility of gaining access to the appropriate officials of the involved states and movements. Instead, the data for this study are drawn from both official documentation and public media output dealing with Cambodia from early 1970 into 1973 for all of the major actors. The bulk of the American sources are derived from the *Department of State Bulletin* and the *New York Times,* while most of the data for the other actors are obtained from the *Asia and Pacific Daily Report* and the *People's Republic of China Daily Report* published by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service and generally acknowledged to be the best sources of radio broadcast transcripts and newspaper translations on Asia available on a daily basis.

I conceive of my book as falling more within the "classical" mode of international relations analysis than the "behavioral," although attempts are made to juxtapose the two in parts of the manuscript. I concur with Patrick McGowan, who has recently argued that both schools of analysis may be called scientific insofar as they attempt to produce "reliable knowledge about the world and to build as valid, precise, and verified general theory as the nature of the subject matter permits."[2] The subject matter of this extended essay constitutes a case study with all the richness and ambiguity inherent in that genre. It is by its nature less susceptible to quantified, standardized, analytic routines than the aggregate data events studies of behavioral research. Neverthcless, theoretical postulates drawn from conflict and negotiation research as well as some content analysis of elite statements are employed in this study on the assumption that behavioral generalizations based on a large number of observations in different contexts may have some transferability to help us understand the dynamics of a specific case.

From the data sources mentioned above, governmental and other elite positions toward the Cambodian war can be derived and compared with such additional indicators of position congruence as government budgetary alloca-

2. Patrick McGowan, *Toward A Dynamic Theory of Foreign Policy* (Syracuse: Maxwell School International Relations Program Feb. 1971) p. 4.

tions to the war, fluctuations in popular support for insurgents and government, and political and social policies in Cambodia designed to win adherents to each side. It should then be possible to relate the attitudinal characteristics of each actor toward the war to other forms of its behavior and finally to compare them across actors. From such comparisons an understanding of the congruence/incongruence orientation toward the Cambodian war may be obtained. And from the total study it should be possible to project at least a subjective estimate of the probabilities specifically for a successful negotiated settlement in Cambodia as well as to generalize in a limited way about the future prospects of small-state independence in a region of contentious larger powers.

It might be best to state the research problem at this point as a series of questions for which the data on each actor will be sifted in an attempt to provide plausible answers:

(1) How did each of the major protagonists (the Lon Nol government and the RGNUC) reconcile its claims of independence with its client status, toward the United States/RVN, or DRV/China?

(2) What roles did the mentor states (United States/RVN and DRV/China) play in affecting the terms of both the war and potential conflict settlement? And, corollary to this question, were there goal conflicts internal to the mentor states which cross-pressured decisionmakers, as for example might be the case when general ideological support for national liberation movements is confronted with regional balance considerations, requiring less than total victory on the part of one's client?

(3) Did the goals of the actors change over time and developing circumstances, as for example the shift that might be discerned in American goals from support of the Vietnamization policy, which initially justified U.S. intervention, to a commitment to the maintenance of a noncommunist Cambodian government?

(4) What were the underlying assumptions of each actor about the adversaries' goals and staying power? Is there any evidence that the conflict could be moved from a zero-sum to a cooperative-sum encounter?

All of the above questions are phrased in very general terms. They can be further operationalized only through a thematic analysis of elite statements and activities related to allies, enemies, and preferred outcomes. No specific hypotheses have been generated to explain the data analysis, in large part because most empirical, quantitative research in international politics is carried out at a much higher level of generality. Hence, the hypotheses generated are frequently inapplicable at the case study level.[3] Rather the series of above questions provides the analyst with several prisms through which to examine and order the documentation so that he can allocate some information for all of the actors on all of the categories. The research approach, then, remains elementary and at a low level of generality but contains all the richness and ambiguities of its genre—the case study—while still attempting to provide categories of behavior in order to compare actors.

3. See, for example, the very sophisticated predictive models of *systemwide* foreign policy in McGowan, passim. None of McGowan's theorems would shed light on foreign-policy perceptions and alternatives in this case study, although a number of case studies, like this one, could provide McGowan with the reliable empirical content necessary to test his theorems. In other words, I view the two kinds of research as complementary rather than contradictory. And I would further contend that systematic case studies are necessary to provide the requisite empirical material to verify formal models.

Annex II. Evaluative assertion analysis of Prince Sihanouk's messages to the Khmer Nation

In the body of Chapter IV we have examined Sihanouk's Messages to the Khmer Nation through a topical breakdown in order to infer his interests rather than the messages' impact on the Cambodian target audience. In selecting frequency measures we made two related assumptions: (a) that the frequency with which one of the topics appears throughout the messages is a valid indicator of its importance; and (b) that every topical unit has the same weight as every other; this permits aggregation or direction comparison.[1] More information may be obtained, however, by applying another form of quantitative content analysis to parts of Sihanouk's messages in order to determine more precisely the intensity of the Prince's evaluation of particular attitude objects. For this purpose we apply *evaluative assertion analysis,* a technique that breaks message content down into *attitude objects*—like the Phnom Penh regime, the DRV, and the CPR—and then relates them to *verbal connectors* and *common-meaning terms.* Preparation of a message for evaluative assertion analysis requires translation into one of two general forms:[2]

A. Attitude object (AO_1)—verbal connector (C)—common-meaning term, usually an adjective describing the attitude object (cm).

B. Attitude object$_1$ (AO_1)—verbal connector (C)—attitude object$_2$ (AO_2).

The purpose of this method is to measure *intensity* independently of *frequency.* The measurement of an attitude object, according to evaluative assertion analysis, is the sum of its evaluation in assertions of form A and form B. In each case the value is the *product* of the verbal connector and common meaning term (form A) or attitude object$_2$ (form B).[3]

Table A.1 shows an example of the data chart employed in analyzing portions of Sihanouk's messages. The example in Table A.1 illustrates two separate evaluative dimensions on which Sihanouk has placed his successors. The first two display a negative valuation of the character of the Phnom Penh regime, but the last two show a positive evaluation of its strength—at least at the time of the Prince's ouster. In terms of the semantic differential scale (valuation, potency, and activity), the scaled statement demonstrates that Sihanouk rated the Phnom Penh regime negatively on the first criterion but positively on the second and third.

Every fourth message of the Prince to the Khmer nation through 1971, and all 1972 messages, were chosen for evaluative assertion analysis for any references to the following attitude objects: the United States, South Vietnam, and the Phnom Penh government and the RGNUC (Table A.2, p. 164). This analysis describes both the valence of the Prince's evaluation of these objects and any changes that have occurred over time. In addition, because of the few references

1. Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1969), p. 122.

2. For a more detailed explanation of evaluative assertion analysis, see Robert C. North et al., *Content Analysis* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963), chap. 6, pp. 91–102.

3. North, p. 95.

Table A.1. *Example of evaluative assertion scaling for Sihanouk's Messages to the Khmer Nation* "The indecency of the Lonolites is at its maximum when they declare to their Yankee masters . . . that they overthrow Sihanouk in order to hand over the key of independent, neutral, and peaceful Cambodia to U.S. imperialism. . . ."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Source	AO_1	C	*Value of column* 3	AO_2 *or* cm	*Value of column* 5	*Product of columns* 4 *and* 6
Sihanouk's December 15, 1970, Message to the Khmer Nation, NCNA	1. Lon Nolites	[are]	+3	indecent	−3	−9
	2. Lon Nolites	declare	+3	to Yankee masters	−3	−9
	3. Lon Nolites	over-threw	+3	Sihanouk	+3	+9
	4. Lon Nolites	hand over	+3	Cambodia	+3	+9

to the DRV and Peking, all messages in which they appeared were also scaled. Since the process of hand-scaling and calculating evaluative assertion analysis is a tedious and lengthy one, only the summary results for each message are presented here, and only one paragraph per page of message was randomly chosen for analysis, although, of course, only those paragraphs with references to the specific attitude objects under consideration are comprised in the data universe. Figure A.1 is a graphic presentation of the same data and shows at a glance Sihanouk's attitudinal trends toward each object over time.

The top row displays a typical black-white propaganda evaluative dimension in which Sihanouk's enemies (the United States, South Vietnam, and Phnom Penh) score consistently low, while his own movement (the RGNUC) is viewed only in the most positive terms. The few observations of the DRV and CPR also fall into a high evaluation pattern as major backers.

The potency dimension, middle row, is more interesting, for here, instead of positive and negative attitudes, are plotted Sihanouk's opinions of the *strength* and hence staying power of the major actors in the Cambodian conflict. A considerable difference from the top row is manifest. The United States is viewed as an extremely potent actor through 1971, with the exception of the Prince's message of December 31, where it falls off markedly as a direct result of Phnom Penh's failure in the Chenla II operation on Highway 6. American potency is not mentioned again by the Prince until September 1972, when Washington is depicted as heading toward an inevitable defeat in Indochina. Nevertheless, in his October message, the Prince once again acknowledged the crucial role of U.S. air power in maintaining the Phnom Penh government, implying that so long as the United States was willing to sustain its air and logistics support, it was unlikely that Cambodia would fall completely to his Front. The Prince also viewed the Saigon government as strong and very much in command of those sections of Cambodia in which ARVN elements were located through most of this period, with one exception. The ARVN's defeat in late 1971 and its withdrawal from the Krek area of east Cambodia in early 1972 elicited a low potency rating from Sihanouk in his January 1972 message. Nevertheless, by September, Saigon's activities in eastern Cambodia were once more perceived to be strong

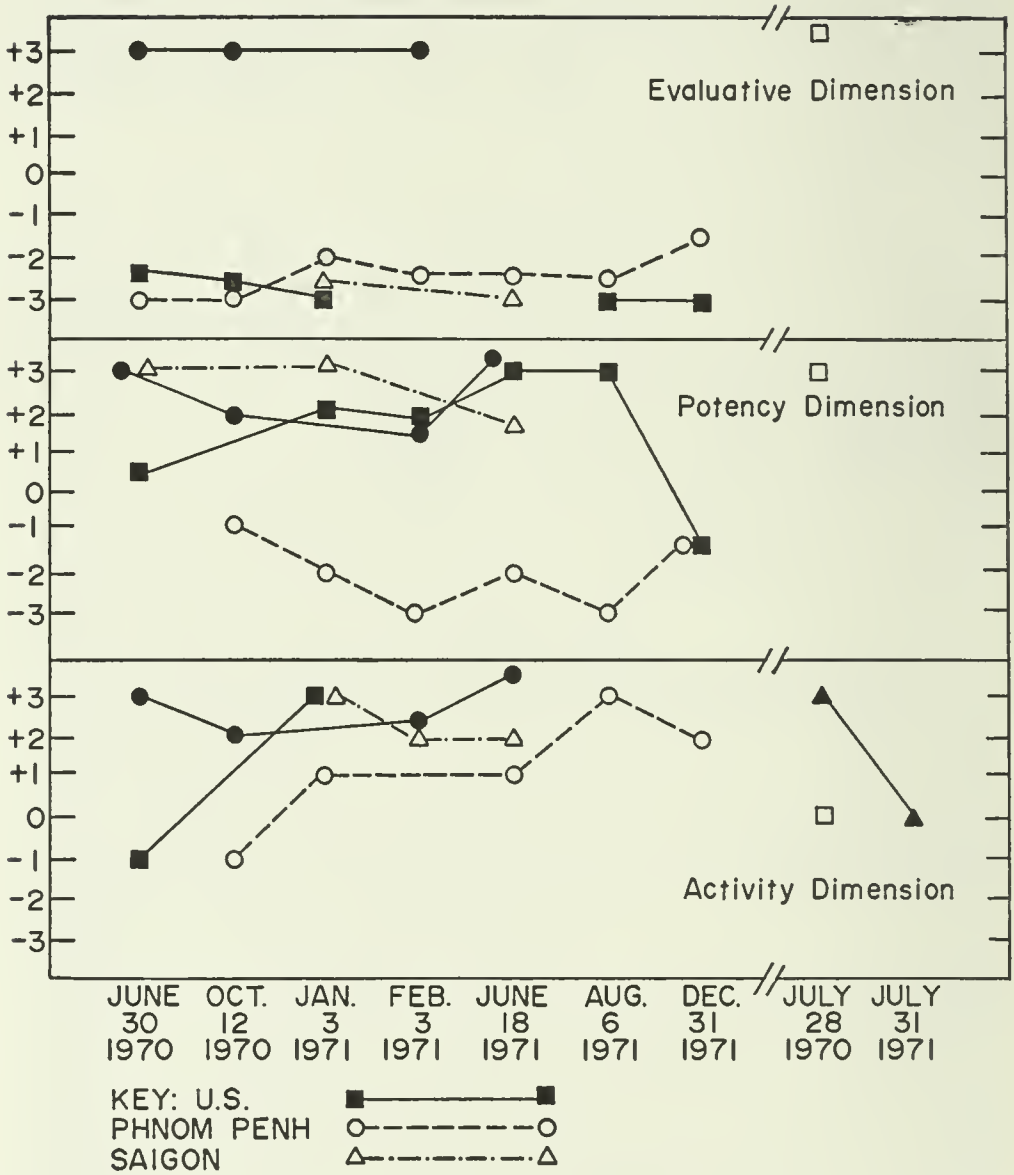

Fig. A.1 Three dimensions of Sihanouk's messages—June 1970 to October 1972

and decisive by the Prince. The Phnom Penh regime, of course, was viewed as weak and totally dependent on outside support for its survival—an object unworthy of consideration as a legitimate government and hence unacceptable as a negotiating partner. In contrast, the RGNUC was seen as being just as strong as the United States and South Vietnam—seemingly able to hold its own against all adversaries.

The bottom row measures a somewhat more ambiguous concept, activity—that is, the Prince's perception of whether the actors involved are active and initiatory in their behavior within the Cambodia war or passive and malleable. In general, there appears to be a fairly high correlation between actor scores on

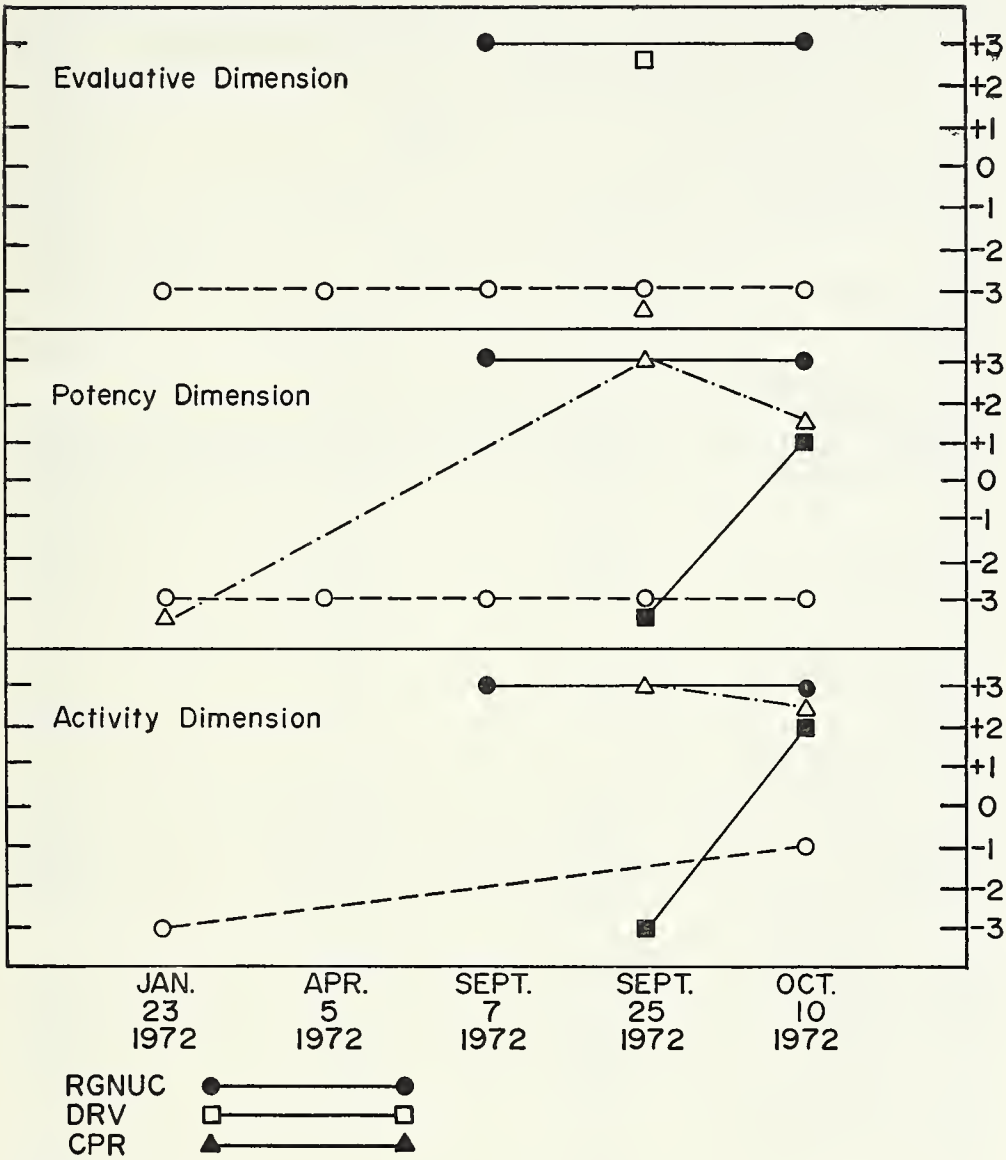

Fig. A.1 (cont.)

this dimension and the potency measure. Actors considered to be powerful are also viewed as acting independently to influence the course of the war. The United States, South Vietnam, and the RGNUC all scaled high on this dimension. Interestingly, so did the Phnom Penh government until 1972, when the regime's growing incapacity was reflected in Sihanouk's utter scorn. A substantive interpretation of this finding might be that the Prince has perceived all actors, regardless of their potency or positive or negative qualities, as heavily engaged in trying to defeat their adversaries in order to win Cambodia. Such an interpretation could reflect a growing frustration on Sihanouk's part that he is out of the action and unable to meaningfully affect his country's future. He may have come to believe that he has been relegated to the secondary role of propagandist for the "liberation movement" rather than its leader.

Table A.2. *Summary table of evaluative assertion analysis scores for selected Sihanouk messages to the Khmer Nation as measured through the evaluation, potency, and activity dimensions*

Sihanouk message and attitude objects	*Evaluation*	*Potency*	*Activity*
KCNA, 30 June 1970			
US	−2.67	.67	−1.00
Phnom Penh	−3.00		
Saigon		3.00	
RGNUC	3.00	3.00	3.00
NCNA, 12 Oct. 1970			
Phnom Penh	−3.00	−1.50	−1.00
RGNUC	3.00	2.33	2.33
NCNA, 3 Jan. 1971			
US	−3.00	2.50	3.00
Phnom Penh	−2.00	−2.00	1.00
Saigon	−3.00	3.00	3.00
NCNA, 3 Feb. 1971			
US		2.00	
Phnom Penh	−3.00	−3.00	
Saigon			2.00
RGNUC		2.00	2.00
NCNA, 18 June 1971			
US		3.00	
Phnom Penh	−3.00	−2.16	1.00
Saigon	−3.00	1.83	2.00
RGNUC	3.00	3.00	3.00
KCNA, 6 Aug. 1971			
US	−3.00	3.00	
Phnom Penh	−3.00	−3.00	3.00
NCNA, 31 Dec. 1971			
US	−3.00	−2.00	2.00
Phnom Penh	−1.75	−2.00	2.00
NCNA, 28 July 1970			
DRV	3.00	3.00	− .33
CPR	3.00		3.00
NCNA, 31 July 1971			
CPR	2.00		1.00
NCNA, 23 Jan. 1972			
Phnom Penh	−3.00	−3.00	−3.00
Saigon		−3.00	
NCNA, 5 April 1972			
Phnom Penh	−3.00	−3.00	
NCNA, 7 Sept. 1972			
Phnom Penh	−3.00	3.00	
RGNUC	3.00	3.00	3.00

Table A.2 (cont.)

NCNA, 25 Sept. 1972			
Phnom Penh	−3.00	−3.00	
Saigon	−3.00	3.00	3.00
DRV	3.00		
US		−3.00	2.50
NCNA, 10 Oct. 1972			
Phnom Penh	−3.00	−2.64	−1.00
RGNUC	3.00	3.00	3.00
Saigon		1.66	3.00
US		1.66	3.00

Total raw scores are divided by $3N$, N being the number of themes, in order to obtain results comparable to the semantic differential scales (with a range of +3 through −3). See Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities,* pp. 107, 125.

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Acronyms that occur in the text

AFP	Agence France Presse
AKI	Cambodian Information Agency
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASPAC	Asian Pacific Council
CORD	Committee on Rural Development
CPLAF	Cambodian People's Liberation Armed Forces (communist)
CPR	Chinese People's Republic (communist)
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (communist)
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam (communist)
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
FANK	Khmer Republic Army
FUNK	National United Front of Kampuchea (communist)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff (U.S.)
KCNA	Korean Central News Agency
NCNA	New China News Agency
NFLSV	National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (communist)
NLF	National Liberation Front (communist)
PLA	People's Liberation Army (communist)
PRGSV	People's Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (communist)
RGNUC	Royal Government of the National Union of Cambodia
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
VNA	Vietnam News Agency
VPA	Vietnam People's Army (communist)

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